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GREEN IDEOLOGY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE:

An Examination of Theories of Green Politics in Relation to a Sociological Investigation of the Worldview of Green Party Activists

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ABSTRACT

Green Ideology in Theory and Peactice: An Examination of Theories of Green Politics in Relation to a Sociological Investigation of the Worldview of Green Party Activists

This thesis considers the question of what constitutes a green ideology by way of a critical examination of political and social theories applicable to the study of green politics, including the work of Dobson, Hayward, Benton, Giddens, Beck, Offe, and Habermas. The theoretical perspectives are then contrasted with an example of a green ideology in practice, provided by a qualitative investigation of the worldview of Green Party activists, as revealed by in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary sources. This part of the study focuses on the beliefs underlying the political practice of those involved, concentrating on areas such as: environmentalism, ecology, and economics; equity and social justice; participatory democracy, decentralisation, and the state; the ethic of responsibility; lifestyle as politics; and the relationship between green politics and other political philosophies. Analysing the findings of this investigation in the light of the theoretical perspectives, it is argued that though these often provide insights concerning certain aspects of green ideology, few theories are able to address the full range of concerns, or the depth of meanings, which are apparent in the activists' accounts. This can be attributed to the tendency of most theories of green politics to rely on unrepresentative sources, with the consequence that they remain insufficiently grounded in the beliefs and practices of those actually involved. By using this exploration of the outlook of Green Party activists as a case study, it is suggested that it is possible to resolve many of the tensions that arise within and between theoretical accounts, which often result from misconceptions concerning what those involved in green politics actually do believe and practice.

Ian Coates, Department of Sociology, University of Bristol, Ph.D. thesis, September 1997

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DECLARATION

In accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bristol, I declare that this thesis consists of my own work with full reference being made to all published and unpublished sources used. The views expressed are those of the author and do not represent those of the University of Bristol.

Ian Coates

September 1997

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INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Research

Many research projects doubtless take a final form very different from that originally envisaged. This thesis is no exception in that it began with the intention of investigating attempts by groups on the far right to portray themselves as green. In particular it focused on the National Front's appropriation of the rhetoric of green politics during the 1980s. This process coincided with the appearance of several studies which purported to demonstrate continuities between the contemporary green movement and historical figures within the far right, including some sympathetic towards, or associated with, Nazi Germany. Finding neither sets of claims convincing, I undertook an examination of the evidence for and against the cases being made. This commenced with a documentary investigation of the process by which the National Front sought to portray itself as green, as revealed by its own publications. It soon became apparent that the National Front's appropriation of green issues constituted part of a strategic response to the political difficulties faced by groups on the far right due to changing structural conditions, which involved attempts to reconstruct their surface ideology by incorporating popular issues in order to broaden their appeal. In practice the National Front revealed little understanding of green concerns, and rather than formulating responses to contemporary environmental problems, interpreted these issues primarily in terms of constructing a historical genealogy that could be portrayed as racially nationalist and green. In order to examine the sources used to justify the

National Front's claims to represent a green historical tradition, and to consider the validity of those historical studies which traced the emergence of political ecology to figures associated with the far right, I began a historical investigation of environmental concern in Britain between the 1920s and the 1940s. This revealed a diversity of social groups and institutions expressing different forms of concern over what could be considered environmental issues, within which the contribution of the far right remained comparatively marginal.

Though concluding that there was little correspondence, past or present, between the outlook of the far right and contemporary green politics, the whole investigation raised a question, for in seeking to say what a green ideology was not, it was necessary to say what it was. Searching for an answer to this question I encountered a problem, for despite the vast amount of literature which has been generated on the subject of green politics, I could not discover one account which satisfactorily defined what a green ideology consisted of. As I continued my investigations the difficulty of finding an adequate answer to the question of what is a green ideology increasingly assumed a greater importance until it became the focus for the whole thesis. Some traces remain of the original direction of the research in the form of some of the issues chosen as examples, and regarding some of the discussions of the political location of green ideology. Otherwise the content and the intention of the thesis have entirely changed in scope from the original set of concerns that gave rise to it. Having decided to concentrate on the question of what constitutes a green ideology, I began to undertake a systematic examination of the theoretical literature relating to the topic. Though many of these accounts were able to provide general overviews of the

subject, or to contribute insights into particular areas of concern, for the most part they seemed to depend on a rather limited set of sources which were not necessarily representative of the actual beliefs and practices of those involved in green politics. Hence I came to suspect that most theoretical portrayals of green politics were insufficiently grounded.

In an attempt to overcome this problem I decided to examine the available documentary sources relating to what I saw as the most obvious examples of a green political practice, the green parties. My main focus was on the UK Green Party, though I also supplemented this investigation with material on the German Green Party available in English translation. As regards the documents produced by the UK Green Party these seemed to concentrate almost entirely on issues relating to organisation, strategy, and policy formation, with little discussion of underlying philosophy or beliefs. This came as something of a surprise to me, especially following as it did my investigation of the National Front, whose publications discuss little else but their ideological position, with almost no consideration of the practicalities of running a small political party and working towards long-term objectives. Whilst this can partly be attributed to the differences in outlook, structure, and aims of the two parties, I still found the relative absence of discussions of beliefs in the Green Party's publications striking. Though a number of books written by prominent Green Party members did attempt to outline some of the philosophical concerns underlying green politics, it was difficult to gauge the extent to which the views expressed were representative of Party members as a whole. There had also been some research undertaken on the Green Party, mostly by political scientists, but this tended to focus on historical development, membership,

organisation, strategy, and policy, once again with little consideration of the beliefs of those involved.

Research Questions and Methodology

My reading of the available literature had thus taken me little further towards answering my question of what a green ideology consists of. At this stage I decided my investigation would have to take a different form which would require going and asking those involved in green politics what they thought it consisted of. This would then enable me to relate such accounts back to the theoretical perspectives to evaluate the interpretations they provide of green politics, and to assess the extent to which these are corroborated by the outlook of those involved in a green political practice. Thus I conceived of the research taking the form of constructing a dialogue between theory and practice. This led to a reformulation of my research questions. The first question now became; what is the ideological outlook of those involved in green politics? Related to this was a second question; how do theoretical perspectives correspond to the ideological outlook of those involved in green politics? In order to provide an additional focus for the investigation which would bridge theory and practice, as well as clarifying the extent to which a green ideology could be regarded as distinctive, I formulated a third question; how can green politics be located in relation to other political philosophies? As my main focus of interest concerned the underlying beliefs of those involved I decided upon in-depth interviews with a small sample of activists as the most suitable way to uncover these, though complementing this

approach with participant observation and documentary research to set these individual accounts within a collective context.

Choosing a Focus

In order to answer these questions it would have been useful to study representatives of several groups engaged in different forms of green politics to gain a comparative perspective. However, due to the constraints of time and resources I decided it would only be possible to research one such group. Since I had already undertaken a documentary investigation of the Green Party, and having been intrigued by the lack of discussion of its underlying beliefs, it seemed a suitable candidate for the research. There were a number of other reasons for deciding upon the Green Party as a representative of a green ideology and practice. When discussing my original documentary investigation I stated that the Green Party seemed an obvious choice. This can partly be connected to its position in relation to the contemporary environmental movement. Most accounts of the development of the environmental movement in Britain have sought to distinguish early forms of environmental concern, principally those associated with nature conservation, from newer forms of environmentalism which arose in the 1960s and 1970s. Apart from the fact that it has arisen in the context of a distinct set of economic and social structural conditions, and involves a response to a specific set of problems, the contemporary environmental movement is generally differentiated from earlier forms of conservationism on two main counts. These are firstly that it has developed a global awareness of the threats to human and non-human

environments, and secondly that it has become a political force in its own right, advocating a radical transformation of society.[1]

Whereas conservationism led to the foundation of institutions involved in lobbying and campaigning, which necessarily had policy dimensions, it sought to implement change by working in close consultation with government, maintaining a 'non-political' stance. Contemporary environmental organisations, whilst pursuing similar strategies of lobbying, campaigning, and consultation, have been prepared to combine these approaches with alternative tactics such as mass protests and direct action which have brought them into confrontation with government. Organisations such as Friends of the Earth (founded in the USA in 1969, and in the UK in 1970) and Greenpeace (founded in the USA in 1970 and in the UK in 1977) epitomise such approaches. Yet though involved in activities that incorporate a political agenda, as pressure groups they nevertheless adopt a broadly non-partisan stance as regards institutionalised politics.

The Green Party (founded in 1973), by entering into direct competition with other political parties, represents a strategic approach very different from that pursued by other environmental groups, one which furthermore requires the development of a democratic organisational structure and a distinct political programme. Thus it constitutes a political force in its own right, which is pursuing the goal of a radical transformation of society, in a way that most other environmental organisations are not. As one of the oldest green parties in the world, and as one of the first organisations to articulate such a position, thus embodying a

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1 See for example, J. McCormick, The Global Environmental Movement: Reclaiming Paradise, London, Belhaven Press, 1989, especially Chapter 3.

continuity of outlook for over twenty years, it seemed that the Green Party provided the ideal subject for an investigation of what constitutes a green ideology.

Another factor which has some bearing on this choice of topic relates to my own value perspective. Since childhood I have had a deep appreciation of the natural environment. Later I also developed an abiding interest in politics, which I have always found simultaneously fascinating and disillusioning. At some point these concerns became combined. In the early 1970s I remember being asked what my politics were, to which I replied that if Friends of the Earth stood in elections I would vote for them. Looking back I do not know what informed this statement. I can only presume that being a child of the 1960s that such ideas, combining environmental concern with a scepticism concerning existing forms of organised politics, were current within the counter-cultural milieu within which I moved at the time. I was not aware of the Ecology Party then, and though I did subsequently learn of its existence, it did not seem to be active in any of the areas where I lived. It was only in the late 1980s when at university as a mature student that my interests in environmental politics were revived through my studies and I made contact with my local Green Party. I attended local meetings and became a Green Party member, though I let my membership lapse a year later, frustrated by a series of personality clashes and factional disputes, which I later discovered were quite untypical of most local Green Parties. However, I retained my interest in green politics, and this period did provide me with knowledge and experience which was to prove invaluable when I came to undertake my research on the ideological outlook of Green Party members. Thus my value stance towards my chosen subject can best be described as one of broad

sympathy towards the outlook and objectives of green politics, though remaining highly critical of some of the associated positions adopted and means pursued.

Terminology and Definitions

The whole area of the politics of the environment is plagued with problems concerning the terms used and how they are defined. In order to avoid one confusion I will follow the convention of using Green with a capital G only when discussing matters relating to particular green parties, such as the Green Party or the German Greens, but green with a small g to denote green politics, the green parties, or the green movement in general. Since the whole purpose of this thesis is to elucidate what green ideology is, at this stage it is not possible to give more than a provisional definition of the term green. I am using it to describe a political position which arises from an integrated critique of current economic, social, and political practices which result in adverse social and environmental consequences, to which it proposes as a solution the creation of a socially just and environmentally sustainable society. In this I am not seeking to suggest that the green parties are alone in incorporating such aspirations, since there exists a broader green movement consisting of numerous organisations, groups, and individuals who broadly share these goals, but who may adopt a variety of means to achieve them. However, a problem arises since once a term such as green enters common currency it may be debased or appropriated to signify little more than adding a veneer of environmental concern to current practices, but such a usage

ignores the integrated analysis and the radical solutions proposed by the advocates of green politics.

Another problem exists in connection as to where to draw the boundary between green politics or the green movement and environmentalism or the environmental movement. Green politics and environmentalism may share elements of a common analysis and concerns over the consequences of current practices, but where they can be seen to differ is as regards strategy and ultimate goals. Whereas environmentalism may advocate working towards a more sustainable society, it generally does so by working within the system and without mounting a challenge to existing economic and political structures. It may be that future developments will lead to green politics as represented by the green parties being incorporated within the system in a similar way, but as long as they retain their fundamental critique of existing practices, combined with their radical vision of an alternative future they will not be wholly assimilable. Thus though there are areas of common concern and even shared goals between green politics and environmentalism, differences are also apparent, as will be considered in discussions of theoretical perspectives and of the activists' accounts regarding these issues.

Whilst on the subject of definitions, ideology is another term that requires at least some qualification. It is not the intention of this thesis to contribute to the extensive debate concerning the concept of ideology. This is not to deny the importance of this debate, but to seriously address the implications of a consideration of green politics in terms of the concept of ideology would require a thesis in itself.[2] The usage of ideology adopted here is a non-

2 For overviews of the debate concerning the concept of ideology see: J. Larrain, The Concept of Ideology, London, Hutchinson, 1979; J. Donald and S. Hall (eds.), Politics and Ideology, Milton Keynes,

evaluative one, and does not imply that it necessarily involves some form of false consciousness. Rather the intention is to use the term merely to indicate the belief system of a social group who happen to be members of a political party, with ideology being used synonymously with the term worldview.

The Structure of Thesis

In order to address the issues raised by the research questions, the thesis adopts the following structure. Chapter 1 provides a review of the theoretical literature which relates to the subject of green ideology. This material has been classified into three broad approaches. Firstly attempts to identify, describe, analyse, and categorise different forms of green politics are considered, an approach characteristic of political theory. The second section examines sociological theories which have been applied to explain the emergence of green politics and the areas of concern it represents, focusing on factors such as the education, occupation, and social class of those involved, along with the broader structural changes to which they were responding. The third section explores those theoretical approaches which have focused on the political location of green ideology, particularly in relation to existing political traditions including those of Marxism, fascism, conservatism, anarchism, feminism, and liberalism.

However, since it is being argued that most theoretical perspectives do not sufficiently consider the outlook of those

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Open University Press, 1986; and T. Dant, Knowledge, Ideology and Discourse: A Sociological Perspective, London, Routledge, 1991.

involved in green politics, Chapter 2 outlines in more detail the methodology adopted in order to ascertain what Green Party activists believe and practice. The main focus here is on the selection of a sample of interviewees and on the interview process itself. Some attention is also given to the context of research, what was involved in the participant observation aspect of the investigation, and concerning documentary sources, for a consideration of all these factors was necessary to complement the individual accounts I was being given by the Green Party activists.

Chapter 3 provides a more detailed examination of what is revealed by the documentary sources which include Party publications, published accounts by prominent members, and academic research on the Green Party to date. This provides a focus for an analysis of the Green Party in terms of its foundation, historical development, and the structural conditions within which it operates, as well as considering its membership, organisational structure, strategy, policy, and what can be discovered concerning ideology from existing accounts. Though such sources contribute essential background information concerning the Green Party's activities, public stance, and the context within which it is operating, the question of precisely what beliefs are held by those involved cannot be ascertained from the material available.

Thus Chapter 4 presents an outline of the worldview of Green Party activists as revealed by the in-depth interviews. Following an analysis of the social characteristics of the interviewees, the main part of the Chapter constructs a composite picture of what a green ideology consists of, organised under five main headings: ecology and economics; equity and social justice; political alternatives; ethical basis and values; and lifestyle. This draws on selected quotes from

the interviews to provide a discussion of the content and meaning of green politics in the activists' own words, interspersed with my commentary to contextualise these remarks.

Chapter 5 seeks to provide an analysis of the activists' accounts of green politics by relating these back to some of the theoretical perspectives from Chapter 1. However, rather than attempting to consider the full range of issues which emerged, the discussion here will focus on five themes: environmentalism, ecology and the critique of economic growth; social justice, class, and exclusion; green politics and the state; nature as value; and lifestyle as politics. These themes were selected because they correspond to each of the five headings into which the activists' accounts were organised in Chapter 4, and to issues raised by the theoretical perspectives, thus allowing an analysis of the two approaches in relation to each other.

Focusing on the issue of the political location of green ideology, Chapter 6 similarly combines the activists' accounts and the theoretical perspectives. This proceeds from the activists' assessment of the relationship between green politics and other political philosophies, including their attitudes towards socialism, anarchism, liberalism, conservatism, and feminism, connecting these views to those theoretical studies which discuss these issues. Also included here will be an evaluation of the activists' critique of capitalism, which can be regarded as a defining feature of their stance towards other political parties. The second section will examine a number of common criticisms levelled against green politics, consisting of claims that it displays parallels with fascist ideology, or that it is implicitly authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban, and seeks to return to a rural idyll or state of nature, alongside the activists' responses to

such charges. A final section will focus on the issue of where green politics can be positioned in relation to the left-right political spectrum, noting the activists' divisions on this issue, and a comparable confusion amongst theoretical commentators.

The conclusion will seek to draw the findings together to argue that although the theoretical perspectives are often able to contribute valuable insights towards an understanding of some aspects of green politics, these remain of limited applicability precisely because such accounts tend to rely on unrepresentative sources and are thus insufficiently grounded in the beliefs of those involved in a green practice. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that even when available documentary sources and the findings of existing research are considered, certainly in the case of the Green Party, the beliefs underlying the practice of green politics are not immediately apparent since these receive little discussion in material available in the public domain. Thus only by going and talking to those involved is it possible to ascertain how they understand the content and meaning of green politics. This is revealed as consisting of a number of interrelated elements which combine an analysis of the economic, social, political, and ethical spheres, which forms the basis of a recognisable and comprehensive worldview.

When setting the picture which emerges here against the theoretical perspectives of green ideology, to the extent that these do draw attention to the combination of certain sets of concerns, many theories can be partly corroborated by the activists' accounts. Few theoretical studies seem to grasp the full range of the activists' worldview, or the way in which they interpret some of the component elements. However, there are areas where some of the theoretical perspectives are able to provide explanations which are highly

applicable, particularly in areas where the activists seemingly adopt contradictory stances, such as in the case of their attitude towards the state. Yet this process can also go the other way as the activists' accounts can reveal mistaken assumptions in the theoretical perspectives, thus offering possible resolutions of some of the tensions within and between such portrayals. The main problem seems to arise concerning theoretical portrayals of how green politics conceptualises the environment, ecology, and nature. As revealed by the activists' accounts green politics cannot be described as merely environmentalist, nor do they separate concerns about the relationship with nature from social issues.

Difficulties also become apparent in relation to some aspects of debates concerning the political location of green ideology. Though it can be seen that the activists have incorporated a number of elements from existing political ideologies, they also reject core assumptions associated with these, most notably in connection with their critique of economic growth. Drawing on elements from a number of sources, these have been reinterpreted and combined with other elements to create a distinct new outlook. However, in seeking to articulate such a new political position, because it incorporates both a critique of modernity and an emphasis on concern over human relationships with nature, this has led to criticisms that green politics is somehow backward looking. It will be seen that such charges largely arise from misconceptions over positions that greens actually do take, for though they articulate an ambivalent attitude towards many aspects of modernity, they also encompass a variety of value positions that certainly cannot be represented as authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban or backward looking. Whereas the activists' accounts reveal elements of a romantic critique of

modernity, particularly as regards their rejection of purely instrumental forms of rationality, they cannot be said to reveal a strong desire to return to some kind of rural idyll or state of nature as many theoretical perspectives seem to imply.

This can also be related to green attempts to challenge the left-right political spectrum, for in seeking to transcend existing political positions, it is not always clear to critics where green politics does stand. It will be seen that the activists themselves are divided on this issue, with some insisting it is neither left nor right and cannot be located on the spectrum at all, some saying it is not on the spectrum but towards the left, whilst the remainder place it unambiguously on the left of the spectrum. As it will be seen where they do agree is that green politics represents an entirely distinct political position that is focused on the creation of a future sustainable society and not a return to some imagined past. Thus by establishing what positions those involved in green politics actually do uphold in terms of the different elements it consists of and how the package of beliefs are understood as a whole, it is possible to resolve some of the problems relating to existing theoretical perspectives, allowing the theorisation of green politics to proceed on a firmer foundation than is presently the case.

CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF GREEN IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Since the emergence of a recognisable ecological or green politics there have been numerous attempts by political and social theorists to describe, analyse, explain, and evaluate this new phenomenon. The earliest such accounts date from the 1970s when the wave of environmental concern over the previous decade began to coalesce into a new political perspective, which included the formation of the first political parties focusing on ecological or green issues. A second set of studies appeared in the early 1980s, coinciding with the first significant electoral successes of the green political parties, especially that of *Die Grünen* in 1983. The rest of this decade saw increasing public and media attention on environmental issues to the extent that mainstream political parties sought to portray themselves as green, culminating in the British Green Party gaining more than fifteen per cent of the vote in the 1989 European elections. This was followed by a proliferation of studies of green politics in the early 1990s. Curiously those studies written in the 1970s and 1980s when green politics was still an emerging trend, often displayed more originality and insight than many later accounts written when something of an established canon of literature on the topic had begun to accumulate.

However, a problem common to most studies of green politics from whatever period, is that on the whole these have been general in approach and, rather than being based on the beliefs and

practices of specific groups advocating green politics, have tended to rely on selected texts by individual commentators regarded as representative of the green movement, or as having acted as an influence upon it. It is surprising how few sources are drawn upon to delineate a green ideology. The most commonly cited sources are classic texts seen as having had a formative influence on the green movement such as *The Limits to Growth*, *A Blueprint for Survival*, and *Small is Beautiful*. Also regularly mentioned are various movement intellectuals, each with their own particular emphasis such as the anarchistic social ecology of Murray Bookchin, the deep ecology of Arne Naess, the bioregionalism of Kirkpatrick Sale, the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock, and writers such as Jonathon Porritt who have sought to synthesise and popularise these ideas.[1] Whilst such texts have undoubtedly been read widely by members of the green movement, the degree of influence they have had is difficult to gauge. It is also difficult to estimate the representativeness of such texts in that they are largely polemical documents mostly written by individuals who are not necessarily connected to a broader constituency within the movement. Whilst some theoretical studies do refer to documents that represent a green political practice, such as the manifestos of green parties, these tend not to be given any more significance than other sources. From the material selected an image of green politics is constructed which tends to consist of an abstract

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1 See: D. Meadows et al., The Limits to Growth, London, Earth Island, 1972; E. Goldsmith et al., A Blueprint for Survival, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972; E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful, London, Blond and Briggs, 1972; M. Bookchin, Towards an Ecological Society, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1980; A. Naess, Ecology, Community and Lifestyle, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989; K. Sale, Dwellers in the Land: the Bioregional Vision, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1985; J. Lovelock, Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979; and J. Porritt, Seeing Green, Oxford, Blackwell, 1984.

package of ideas, more or less logically connected. Whereas philosophical insights can sometimes result from this kind of process, as time has gone on many theoretical portrayals of green politics merely refer to past studies, thus the whole process can become increasingly self-referential, becoming divorced from actual accounts of what most greens believe and practice.

As such portrayals of green politics have taken a number of forms the material will be structured as follows. Section I will consider approaches characteristic of political theory which seek to identify and categorise different kinds of political responses towards environmental issues, and describe the packages of ideas involved. Whilst such studies remain quite general, some use this kind of approach to argue the existence of a distinct green ideology, and to provide a comprehensive outline of what this might consist of, as demonstrated in the work of Andrew Dobson. However, such studies are unable to explain what social and structural forces shaped the emergence of green politics, why it took the form it did, and how the different elements of this new worldview were translated into a new form of political practice.

Thus section II will examine sociological theories concerning green politics which focus on factors such as class, occupational position, education, and the onset of those social and structural changes associated with modernity, as explanations of the concerns, outlook, and values of those involved in the New Social Movements, including green politics. The work of Jürgen Habermas will be given particular emphasis in this respect, since it encompasses all these factors to argue that green politics has been structurally generated. Though his account remains the most comprehensive in its ability to explain green politics as a product of modernity, at the same time he

remains ambivalent concerning its emancipatory potential, since he also characterises it as a backward looking and anti-modernist movement.

In order to resolve this apparent incongruity, section III will examine those theoretical approaches which seek to situate green ideology as on the left or right, or in relation to existing political traditions. This will include portrayals which consider green politics in terms of possible affinities with Marxism, fascism, conservatism, anarchism, feminism, and liberalism. As it will be seen such accounts often involve attempts to appropriate aspects of green politics, and though in this process they often contribute revealing insights, not all of the portrayals which emerge are wholly convincing.

Thus each of these approaches will be considered in turn, though given the crossover that often exists between accounts, these categories are intended merely to provide a means to structure the material rather than constituting a strict typology. Given the vast literature that has been generated in this field, the list of theorists whose work has been included for discussion is by no means exhaustive. These particular accounts have been chosen because they each represent a specific line of approach and adopt a recognisable stance in relation to debates concerning the content and political location of green ideology. As well as providing an overview of the range of theoretical approaches to the study of green ideology, the intention is to identify common themes arising from these accounts which can be applied to an analysis of the worldview of Green Party activists in the Chapters which follow, though as it will be seen some contribute more in the way of insight than others.

I: Descriptions and Categorisations: Green Ideology and Political Theory

One of the earliest attempts to describe and categorise the different ideological forms an environmental outlook could take, and one to which subsequent approaches to the subject invariably refer, was that of Tim O'Riordan. His 1977 typology highlighted what he saw as two contradictory complexes of ideas within environmentalism; ecocentrism and technocentrism.[2] Within ecocentrism he identified two main strands. The first of these involves the idea that some form of communion with nature is a necessity for human well-being, which he derived from the work of American philosophers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold.[3] This notion of the indispensability of nature is also based on the assumption that there exists a set of natural rights to ensure its preservation, inferring a morality from the requirement that there are natural limits to human activities. O'Riordan labels this bioethical approach as deep environmentalism. Also within the category of ecocentrism comes another approach based on the idea of the self-reliant community which O'Riordan sees as being expressed in terms of support for small scale organisation, participatory democracy, self-sufficiency and the use of 'soft' or renewable technologies, citing the work of Edward Goldsmith, Fritz Schumacher, Theodore Roszak, and

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2 T. O'Riordan, 'Environmental Ideologies', in Environment and Planning A, Vol. 9, 1977, pp. 3-14. For a later modification of this typology see, T. O'Riordan, Environmentalism (Second Edition), London, Pion, 1981, pp. 375-381.

3 For O' Riordan's sources on bioethics see: R.W. Emerson, 'The Romantic Philosophy of Nature'; and J. Muir, 'In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World'; both in J. Opie (ed.), Americans and Environment, Lexington, Mass., D.C. Heath, 1971; and A. Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, New York, Oxford University Press, 1949.

Ivan Illich as representing this trend.[4] His other category is that of technocentrism which is based on professional expertise to ensure a rational and efficient use of nature. O'Riordan also sees this as taking two possible forms: accommodation, which allows that some concessions must be made towards redistribution and environmental protection; and a cornucopian perspective which would favour technological and managerial solutions to accelerate progress, being less concerned with issues of democracy and the exploitation of nature.

Like most other theoretical accounts O'Riordan's typology is abstracted from relatively few sources and does not deal with the practice of actual groups. In seeking a broad approach such categorisation schemes inevitably overgeneralise. Because of this O'Riordan's categories can be difficult to apply to specific cases. Regarding his ecocentric type, and leaving aside problematic philosophical questions as to the standing of concepts such as natural rights or natural morality, some of his examples contain inconsistencies. For example he cites the Gaia hypothesis as an ecocentric ideology but ignores Lovelock's advocacy of technocentric solutions such as his support for the expansion of nuclear energy programmes. However, O'Riordan's analysis also has strengths in that it draws attention to the disjunction between responses to environmental problems favouring technical or managerial solutions and those seeking alternatives to the domination and exploitation of nature through the transformation of attitudes and activities in relation to it. He also argues that, 'it is the theme of social justice

4 O' Riordan's main sources on ecocommunalism are: E. Goldsmith et al., A Blueprint for Survival, op. cit.; E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful, op. cit.; T. Roszak, Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society, London, Faber, 1973; and I. Illich, Tools For Conviviality, London, Fontana, 1975.

which is central to the environmentalist debate'.[5] On this ground he criticises possible inegalitarian aspects of ecocentricism, but neglects discussion of the communitarian strand in this context, despite his observation that this has the potential to take radical as well as conservative forms. By characterising this strand as opposed to centralisation, bureaucratic elites, large scale technology, economic growth, and overconsumption, and as favouring small scale communities, participatory democracy, soft technologies and self-sufficiency, O'Riordan is describing an ideological outlook similar to that of groups such as the Green Party, as will be seen in Chapter 4.

A much more recent account, written in 1992 but partly influenced by O'Riordan, has been that of Robyn Eckersley. She has sought to construct her own typology in an attempt to encompass more varied forms of environmentalism. Eckersley begins with resource conservation with its emphasis on the utilitarian management of the environment to maximise its efficient use. Her second type is human welfare ecology with its focus on sustaining a pleasant and healthy environment to maintain the quality of people's lives. Thirdly comes preservationism which recognises nature as something to be valued for its own sake, aiming to protect aesthetically pleasing landscapes such as wilderness areas, though without addressing the social and economic issues causing adverse impacts on such environments. Her next category is that of animal liberation, which in recognising the interests of animals as sentient beings provides a challenge to anthropocentrism. Finally she identifies ecocentrism as something which goes beyond the other categories in that whilst it

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5 T. O'Riordan, 'Environmental Ideologies', op. cit., p. 3.

recognises human interests, it also acknowledges those of the whole non-human community, sentient and non-sentient.[6]

Eckersley sees ecocentrism as holistic in that it not only values whole ecosystems, but also considers the relationship of society and environment. Where Eckersley's conception of ecocentricism differs from O'Riordan's is that she places her major emphasis on its non-anthropocentrism. Eckersley talks of this as providing a basis for a green political theory that would reconcile themes of participatory democracy, survival and ecological emancipation. Within such a scheme the green parties are understood as an expression of human welfare ecology because of what she sees as their anthropocentric perspective, even though they do articulate many of the broader concerns she outlines. By contrast Eckersley's portrayal of Greenpeace as representing an ecocentric political practice is hardly convincing given their implicit acceptance of existing political structures and their lack of democratic political participation. This opens up the question of who are to be the agents of an ecocentric emancipatory politics, for without some group to act as bearers of such an outlook Eckersley's scheme remains little more than an idealised construct.

The most commonly cited account of green politics from the perspective of political theory has been Andrew Dobson's *Green Political Thought* dating from 1990.[7] Dobson begins his book by outlining two possible approaches to the study of green politics. The first would be to focus on specific social movements and ideologies, examining the diverse forms these can take in different historical situations. This option Dobson rejects on the grounds that it would

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6 R. Eckersley, Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach, London, UCL Press, 1992.
7 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990.

necessitate too broad a sweep, though it could be argued that at least some consideration of the outlook of particular groups as representative of this new worldview is a requirement for any detailed understanding of green politics. Instead he prefers a second alternative which is to attempt a provisional definition of the ideology, then outline how it describes the world, prescribes a set of objectives, and seeks to motivate action aimed at realising them.[8] However, in ranging through the available literature to select what is considered to be significant or representative, there is a danger of presenting an over-idealised version green ideology in which it appears as a disembodied philosophical construct, rather than as emerging from specific social groups and practices of which the green parties would seem to be an obvious manifestation.

This reservation concerning Dobson's approach can be related to his characterisation of the green parties as being not really green at all since 'the politics of ecology does not follow the same ground rules as its philosophy'.[9] Dobson bases this statement on an assumption that deep ecology should be regarded as providing the philosophical basis of green politics, despite the fact that its emergence as a distinct philosophical position did not predate the existence of a recognisable green political practice. Dobson's stance on this issue results from his differentiation between two categories, one of which he terms ecologism, the other environmentalism, both of which are partly derived from O'Riordan's earlier typology. For Dobson ecologism represents an ecocentric perspective which identifies an intrinsic value in nature and favours a radical transformation of society in order to create a sustainable relationship

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8 Ibid. pp. 11-12.
9 Ibid. p. 68.

with the environment. Environmentalism on the other hand is described by Dobson as anthropocentric, based on an instrumental human self interest and an intention to reform existing practices without necessarily challenging existing social, political and economic structures. Dobson would seem to regard deep ecology as representative of the authentic voice of green politics, whilst the green parties are classified as strongly anthropocentric and thus by implication, merely environmentalist.

This definition could be seen as problematic since deep ecology is almost exclusively the construct of a small number of philosophers, has relatively few practitioners and seems to offer no challenge to existing social and political structures beyond exhorting individuals to harmonise their lifestyle with the environment and thus reduce their impact upon it. Yet elsewhere Dobson expresses doubts about the effectiveness of lifestyle as a strategy for political change.[10] In relation to the second part of his definition of ecologism, it is interesting to note that Dobson's source for the notion of a radical transformation of society is none other than Jonathon Porritt, who has been prominent in both the Green Party and Friends of the Earth; someone who could hardly be described as a deep ecologist.[11] Thus Dobson's category of ecologism conflates two very different perspectives, one philosophical and quiescent, the other representing a movement working to enact a programme of radical social change.

By classifying some movements whose aim is to bring about such

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10 For Dobson's views on lifestyle and politics see, Dobson, ibid., p. 143. On deep ecology see: A. Naess, Ecology, Community and Lifestyle, op. cit.; and B. Devall and G. Sessions, Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered, Salt Lake City, Gibbs Smith, 1985. For a study of deep ecology that attempts to relate it to a deep ecological practice see, P. Lane, The Frontier is Long: Deep Ecology as Theory and Practice: A Sociological Analysis, University of Essex, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1994, especially Chapter 4.

11 Dobson, ibid. p. 7.

changes as merely environmentalist, Dobson apparently undermines the very distinction he is attempting to uphold.

In the second edition of *Green Political Thought*, Dobson modifies his position by stating that his objective is to construct an ideal type of ecologism which should not be confused with actual movements or parties regarded as representing such an outlook.[12] Though his definition of ecologism remains broadly similar to that outlined in the first edition, he does not give the same prominence to deep ecology as constituting the philosophical core of this new worldview, replacing this with a concept of ecocentrism in line with Eckersley's definition. In doing so Dobson retains his distinction between ecologism and environmentalism, arguing that because the latter does not support an ecocentric view or call for fundamental economic, social, or political change, it cannot be regarded as an ideology at all. Indeed he goes further to state that it is possible for environmentalism to be incorporated by any ideology except ecologism, with which it remains incompatible. Some problems remain with this position in that some figures within the green movement such as Porritt move between a radical ecologist stance and an environmentalist one, as Dobson acknowledges, indicating some continuity of outlook between the two perspectives.[13] The issue of the extent of similarities and differences between advocates of green politics and environmentalism will be further explored in Chapter 5.

Despite these difficulties *Green Political Thought* remains the most comprehensive examination of the issues surrounding the philosophy, content, strategies, and objectives of green politics. The strength of Dobson's account is that he demonstrates a thorough

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12 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought (second edition), London, Routledge, 1995, p. 4.
13 Ibid., p. 202.

grasp of green politics as a package consisting of a number of core principles. These include notions of sustainability, limits to growth, quality of life, interdependence, equity, democracy, decentralisation, self reliance, and community, which he sees as combining to inform an analysis of modern society, an image of an alternative society, and a programme to bring about social transformation. In discussing the issues surrounding these topics Dobson displays both sympathy and insight, concluding that green politics can be regarded as a political ideology in its own right, influenced by past political philosophies, but with its own distinct worldview.[14]

In adopting this position Dobson has been criticised by Luke Martell who argues that an ecological framework cannot provide the basis of a new political theory because it is unable to answer questions of justice, equality, freedom, and authority.[15] Whilst accepting that some social and political arrangements might be more favourable to ecological ends, Martell insists that green politics must draw upon existing political traditions to address non-environmental dimensions, which means that it is bound to take a variety of forms, including potentially authoritarian ones. In response Dobson suggests that ecologism is based on a broader set of principles than

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14 Dobson's approach has been reflected in a number of recent textbooks on political ideologies, all of which have seen the necessity to include a chapter on green or environmental ideology. Indeed Dobson has contributed one such chapter himself. See, A. Dobson, 'Ecologism', in R. Eatwell and A. Wright (eds.), Contemporary Political Ideologies, London, Pinter, 1993, pp. 216-238. Other accounts have tended to reproduce Dobson's arguments distinguishing environmentalism from ecologism, taking a similar approach concerning the historical development and content of green ideology and its relationship with other political outlooks, adding little to Dobson's original portrayal. See for example: A. Heywood, Political Ideologies: An Introduction, London, Macmillan, 1992, pp. 242-268; A. Vincent, Modern Political Ideologies, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, pp. 208-237; and M. Kenny, 'Ecologism', in R. Eccleshall et al., Political Ideologies: An Introduction (second edition), London, Routledge, 1994, pp. 218-251.

15 L. Martell, Ecology and Society: An Introduction, Cambridge, Polity, 1994, especially Chapter 5.

Martell allows, extending beyond a concern with ecology to encompass an emancipatory outlook. This leads Dobson to maintain that green politics is unlikely to be compatible with authoritarian solutions since it adopts a broadly left-liberal stance. Further attention will be given to this issue in Chapter 6, where by grounding such debates in the accounts of those involved in green politics, whose worldview closely corresponds to Dobson's portrayal of green ideology, it can be argued that this offers support to his position rather than that of Martell.

Where Eckersley and Dobson suggest that green parties cannot be seen as representative of an ecocentric politics because of their anthropocentrism, Robert Goodin takes a contrary position, implying that green politics has not been anthropocentric enough. This reveals a trend common to many such studies in that rather than examining actual green political beliefs and practices, some theoretical perspectives tend to adopt a prescriptive or even proscriptive stance, deciding what should and should not be included within the scope of green politics. Goodin's *Green Political Theory*, dating from 1992, begins, 'Hopefully my analysis sticks closely enough to the core concerns of actual green parties and self styled green activists to warrant the label "green". Explicating their self conceptions is not, however, my principal aim.' So, instead of trying 'to demonstrate what position greens actually do take', rather he seeks 'to show what position they should take given their core concerns'.[16] Though Goodin partly bases his account on the manifestos of the green parties, showing himself to be in broad agreement with their policy prescriptions, he seeks to separate these from issues of political

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16 R. Goodin, Green Political Theory, Cambridge, Polity, 1992, pp. vii-viii.

organisation, strategy, and practice which have become associated with green politics.

For Goodin the fundamental element of green politics is what he describes as a green theory of value, in which nature is valued in terms of human relationships with it. He separates this from a green theory of agency which would require the reform of political structures and processes which Goodin does not see as a necessary requirement. So though he accepts many green policies, he wants these to be enacted through existing national and international structures, as he believes it is only through working within this framework that solutions will be found to global environmental problems. However, from a green perspective, commitments to participatory democracy and social justice cannot be separated from the environmental component of green politics. Thus in seeking to break this linkage Goodin would presumably be unable to rule out authoritarian and undemocratic responses. Goodin has subsequently revised his stance on this issue, coming to accept that a green theory of agency based on participatory democracy would be more likely to result in the protection of the environment, in that widening representation and increasing discursive democracy would favour generalised rather than particular interests.[17]

Another area Goodin wants to separate away from green politics relates to its emphasis on lifestyle concerns, since he regards these as a denial of politics and collective action. Goodin equates lifestyle with New Age beliefs and suggests that any advocacy of holism is part of a desire to become totally absorbed within nature. He further maintains that this is an all-or-nothing package in which

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17 R. Goodin, 'Enfranchising the Earth and its Alternatives', Political Studies, Vol. 44, No. 5, 1996, pp. 835-849.

those who follow a green lifestyle are required to believe in such things as tree spirits or homoeopathic medicine, on which grounds he argues that people need not, or even should not adopt green lifestyles.[18] Such a view misrepresents how those involved in green politics understand both lifestyle and holism. Whereas some greens may accept various beliefs which could be labelled New Age, many others do not, so holding such views can hardly be regarded as a necessary requirement of green politics. As will be seen from the examination of this issue in Chapter 5, rather than seeing lifestyle in terms of New Age beliefs or individual action, green activists see activities such as limiting their personal consumption of resources and encouraging interpersonal co-operation in their social relationships as an integral part of their collective political practice. It will also be proposed that far from indicating a wish to be absorbed by nature, holism provides those involved in green politics with a method of analysing and understanding the world. Thus Goodin's attempt to select out what he sees as the core elements of a green political theory and discard other aspects of the beliefs and practice of those involved in green politics, is based on a misunderstanding of what these other elements actually involve. It also ignores another of his own arguments which warns those representing other political positions who wish to adopt a green stance that they cannot just pick the bits they like and ignore the rest, since the green political programme consists of a unified moral vision with logical cohesion.[19]

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18 R. Goodin, Green Political Theory, op. cit., pp. 78-83.
19 Ibid., p. 87.

II: Values, Class, and Structure: Green Ideology and Social Theory

Going beyond accounts which have sought to develop a theory of green ideology by constructing packages of ideas based on selected texts, there have been a number of attempts to explain the particular areas of concern represented by the emergence of environmental politics in terms of values and interests, relating these to the social and structural factors influencing those involved. One approach which has sought to explain these developments in terms of a fundamental change in values has been that of Ronald Inglehart who in 1977 coined the term postmaterialist values to describe a set of core attitudes which he associates with the generations brought up in the period of relative peace and prosperity after 1945.[20] He sees postmaterialists as giving a high priority to values such as a concern with the quality of life, care of the environment, self expression, and favouring intimate and less hierarchical social relations, rather than the materialist values predominant amongst the older generations which emphasise the importance of economic growth, technological progress and physical security. Inglehart has sought to substantiate this hypothesis through attitude surveys which he interprets as showing that postmaterialism increases with each generation. He does consider other factors such as cultural and institutional setting, socialisation, political orientation, organisational networks and particular problems facing society, such as environmental ones, but argues that affirmation of postmaterialist values is the strongest

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20 R. Inglehart, The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Amongst Western Publics, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977. See also, R. Inglehart, 'Values, Ideology, and Cognitive Mobilization in New Social Movements' in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler, Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies, Cambridge, Polity, 1990, pp. 43-66.

indicator of participation in the New Social Movements, including the ecology movement.

However, values are difficult things to measure and attitude surveys are unreliable as predictors of actual behaviour. What is more, this theory of value change cannot explain why some are postmaterialists and some are not, as it ignores different economic strata within each cohort as Thomas Poguntke has noted.[21] This also makes it difficult for Inglehart to account for the rise of Thatcherism and the resurgence of the far-right in the 1980s. Where Inglehart claims that support for the ecology movement came disproportionately from postmaterialists, Philip Lowe and Wolfgang Rüdig contend that those undertaking comparative research in Europe have not seen a significant correlation between postmaterialism and the electoral success of green parties.[22] Another problem with Inglehart's notion of postmaterialism is that it is derived from Abraham Maslow's concept of a hierarchy of needs.[23] As Steven Cotgrove and Andrew Duff note, it is not clear that there is a hierarchical relationship between lower order and higher order needs which Inglehart seems to equate with material and post-material values. Neither does Inglehart account for the social construction of needs or consider that it may be problematic to separate material from non-material aspects of needs in order to derive his dualistic system of values.[24]

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21 T. Poguntke, Alternative Politics: The German Green Party, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, especially Chapter 3.
22 For more recent figures see, R. Inglehart, Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society, Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1990, especially p. 373, p. 379, and pp. 384-385. For their counter argument see, P. Lowe and W. Rüdig, 'Political Ecology and the Social Sciences: The State of the Art', British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 16, 1986, pp. 513-550.
23 See, A. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (second edition), New York, Harper and Row, 1970, especially Chapter 4.
24 S. Cotgrove and A. Duff, 'Environmental Values and Social Change', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 32, Pt. 1, 1981, pp. 92-110. For a more detailed critique of Maslow's hierarchy of needs see, W.

Despite such reservations Inglehart's hypothesis cannot be entirely rejected. In focusing on the economic and social context within which the socialisation of post-war generations took place, he has highlighted a number of concerns which became part of the outlook of the green movement. It could be argued that those attracted to green politics were brought up in relative prosperity and peace, yet have come to oppose the very bases of these conditions; economic growth and security based on military threats. Inglehart thus suggests that what they came to value were those things which were perceived to be absent from modern life, hence their focus on alternative forms of satisfaction involving less material needs. However, though the greens do endorse many of the values he identifies, they certainly do not ignore the material dimension. One of the earliest concerns of the green movement was with survival in the face of physical threats such as those posed by nuclear weapons and various forms of pollution, a response which can hardly be described as a higher order need. The destruction of the environment, communities and social relationships are surely very material processes, as are green attempts to mobilise opposition and construct alternative practices. Thus whilst Inglehart's simple dualism of material versus postmaterial cannot be sustained, he nevertheless provides insights into some of the factors influencing what was to become a new worldview.

Cotgrove and Duff believe the experience of affluence during adolescence is insufficient to explain such a shift in values. In research undertaken in the late 1970s, which contrasted the outlook of members of Friends of the Earth with the views of members of

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Leiss, The Limits to Satisfaction: On Needs and Commodities, London, Marion Boyars, 1978, pp. 65-68.

older conservation groups, trade unionists, and industrialists, they found that almost two thirds of the environmentalists they studied could be located in the 'non-productive' sector of the economy, with forty three per cent employed in the caring professions. As will be shown in Chapter 3, this is remarkably similar to the occupational profile of Green Party members uncovered by Rüdig et al. in their research. Cotgrove and Duff suggested that this group placed a high priority on social relationships, communal values, and participation in decision making, as well as being broadly categorised as left in politics, and expressing opposition to the consequences of free market capitalism and unfettered economic growth. Cotgrove and Duff related this to their occupational position within, or dependent upon, a public sector coming under increasing threat. They have also implied that environmentalists may have chosen their occupational position because of values acquired during socialisation, though Cotgrove and Duff believed that the vulnerability of such occupational roles outside productive sector would also have made them sensitive to the limits of economic self interest and market requirements.[25]

Cotgrove and Duff have further contended that environmentalists were responding to an institutional tendency whereby conflicts of values and interests in society are regarded as technical questions which become increasingly de-politicised. Hence for Cotgrove and Duff environmentalists were predominantly concerned with values and sought to re-introduce them into the political sphere, using the idea of nature as a universal value to set against the dominant paradigm of industrial capitalism. In order to

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25 S. Cotgrove and A. Duff, ibid. See also, S. Cotgrove, Catastrophe or Cornucopia, Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, 1982.

counter what was seen as the irrationality of modern industrial society, radical environmentalists wanted to build a different society that would both meet human needs and maintain a sustainable relationship with the environment. In this respect Cotgrove and Duff have even argued that it was not their conditions of existence which generated their ideals, but what they would like their conditions of existence to be, recognising the importance of the utopian impulse in environmental thought.[26]

The consideration of the values of environmentalists in relation to their structural and occupational position does allow Cotgrove and Duff to identify a number of factors that will be shown to have parallels with the concerns of Green Party members, a significant number of whom also work in the public sector and are highly critical of the consequences of market capitalism and economic growth. They also share concerns over social relationships, human values and democratic participation. This implies a continuity of core beliefs between environmentalists and Green Party members, but Cotgrove and Duff cannot explain why a small section of this occupational group should convert these concerns into a distinct set of values or why the environment became the central focus for these concerns, except by suggesting that ecology provided the basis of an oppositional value to counter industrial capitalism.

Education and the New Middle Class

One influence not emphasised by Cotgrove and Duff was education. Though they acknowledged that environmentalists were educated to an above average level, they did not see this as particularly significant because other groups they studied, such as industrialists,

26 S. Cotgrove and A. Duff, op. cit., p. 99.

whilst educated to a similar level, showed no such environmental concern. A number of other analyses have seen education as a key factor affecting the outlook of environmental movements. Raymond Williams has suggested that higher levels of education, social mobility, and leisure amongst the New Middle Class have increased their awareness of the problems facing modern society, including the danger of an environmental crisis. Thus for him it has been a consequence of the existing social structure that environmental issues have been taken up by the middle classes.[27] A similar view has been taken by Eckersley who has emphasised the radicalising effect of the extension of higher education, which she sees as having created a group who are able to use their knowledge of how the system works to make their protests effective.[28] Certainly the expansion of higher education in the 1960s, the associated student protest movement, and the emergence of a counter-cultural perspective must be seen as important influences on the formation of a green political perspective.

Writing in the late 1970s Alvin Gouldner has taken a much more critical stance, questioning the motives that lie behind the adoption of ecological concerns by sections of the New Middle Class. He also focuses on the role of the expansion of higher education but provides a very different interpretation of its significance. In Gouldner's view the increased power of the New Middle Class has been based on specialised knowledge or cultural capital gained through access to higher education. He sees their ideological outlook as resulting from socialisation into a culture of critical discourse transmitted by middle class families and the higher education system. For Gouldner this

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27 R. Williams, Towards 2000, London, Chatto and Windus, 1983, pp. 254-255.
28 R. Eckersley, 'Green Politics and the New Class: Selfishness or Virtue', Political Studies, Vol. 37, 1989, pp. 205-223.

culture of critical discourse has the effect of distancing students from local and particular interests, encouraging attitudes which are cosmopolitan, secular and questioning of authority, as well as fostering a concern with the social totality and a sense of obligation to society as a whole. Thus in their roles as teachers, technocrats or intellectuals, members of this new class see themselves as a universal class representing all interests. Though Gouldner agrees that they probably do constitute the most universalist and internationalist of all classes, he also finds their position morally ambiguous, masking the pursuit of their own interests.[29]

Gouldner relates these interests to the overproduction of this educated class. He sees this as resulting in blocked ascendance, job dissatisfaction, unemployment, and alienation, particularly amongst humanist intellectuals who come to feel increasingly marginalised in a technocratic society. Gouldner identifies one by-product of a perceived status disparity between their accumulation of cultural capital and low level of social power as an increased involvement in political activity. He further suggests that this class are not economistic in outlook, for rather than being motivated by profit, they place value on issues such as the quality of life. They are also likely to be supporters of the welfare state and public education, whilst seeking autonomy from business and political interests. In terms of the particular areas of concern that bring them into potential conflict with dominant interests Gouldner lists issues such as academic freedom, women's rights, consumer protection, and environmental conservation.

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29 A. Gouldner, The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class, London, Macmillan, 1979.

As to why sections of this class should show a concern over the environment, Gouldner argues that apart from developing an awareness of the destructive consequences of modern production such as resource depletion and pollution, ecology can also serve ideological functions. One of these is that it has the potential to overcome the divisions that exist between what he regards as different fractions of the New Middle Class. Gouldner believes that the multi-science character of ecology and the notion of unity incorporated within systems theory provide a basis to bring together different branches of the technical intelligentsia, as well as offering the possibility of enhancing the authority of this group. Regarding his category of humanist intellectuals, Gouldner contends that they are likely to understand ecology in organismic or romantic terms, thus providing them with a new moral evaluation offering a reflexive critique of instrumental rationality. He also notes that ecology has an appeal to a broad constituency, so is able to create the basis of a solidarity which can include all social groups in a new political alliance, with the New Middle Class in the vanguard of course.[30]

Gouldner's account does go some way to providing an alternative analysis that can be applied to the ideological outlook of Green Party members. As it will be seen a large proportion of them are university educated professionals, for the most part arts and social science graduates, and they do seem to endorse a culture of critical discourse. This is certainly apparent in their international outlook, their concern with social totality, and their sense that they

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30 Ibid, pp. 42-43. Gouldner actually offers the argument about ecology offering a new moral evaluation and a reflexive critique of instrumental rationality in relation to scientists who are part of the ecology movement, but it would seem to be even more applicable to his category of humanist intellectuals. See, A. Gouldner, The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar and Future of Ideology, London, Macmillan, 1976, pp. 271-273.

represent all sectors of society. Gouldner's observations on the anti-economism of the New Middle Class, as well as its concern over freedom of speech, the extension of human rights, and the high priority it gives to issues of quality over quantity, are also highly relevant. As to whether their politics can be seen as an expression of blocked ascendence and a sense of marginalisation, this is certainly not immediately apparent from survey material on the Green Party as will be seen in Chapter 3, though the issue will be further considered in Chapters 4 and 5.

Gouldner's arguments on the ideological functions of ecology certainly cannot be dismissed, but neither are they wholly convincing. Given that Gouldner acknowledges differences between how the technical intelligentsia and humanist intellectuals understand ecology, it is not clear whether or not it does provide a basis to unite these class fractions. It could also be said that Green Party members do not seem to comprehend ecology in a romantic or organismic way, though they could be seen as using it to endorse a critique of instrumental rationality. This will be explored in terms of green value perspectives in Chapter 5 and in relation to attitudes to science and technology in Chapter 6. Thus Gouldner provides a plausible account of the concerns of the New Middle Class in relation to their social location and the interests they represent, even though his explanations as to why the environment became the focus around which a new politics coalesced, remain at best partial.

New Social Movement Theory and Green Politics

Recent theories seeking to explain the growth of New Social Movements have tended to follow two avenues: either focusing on the strategies used by such groups to organise and direct available

knowledge, skills and resources within an institutional context, an approach pursued by Resource Mobilisation Theory; or movements have been considered in terms of their abilities to construct new collective identities and social networks in response to structural change.[31] Whilst few of the resulting studies have investigated the practice of green politics, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison have attempted to synthesise these perspectives and apply them to the emergence of environmental movements.

In order to analyse the development of an ecological worldview Eyerman and Jamison apply the concept of knowledge interests, which they see as providing the basis of cognitive practice and collective identity. They regard knowledge interests as having three dimensions. Firstly, a cosmological dimension involves the application of frameworks to interpret the world which though reproduced through practice, Eyerman and Jamison see this process as largely taken for granted. They see the main framework informing this worldview as being derived from a reading of systems ecology, which assumes the interconnection of natural and social processes and leads to a critique of destructive technologies. Hence, they regard an ecological cosmology as arising in response to dominant modernist worldviews. Secondly, Eyerman and Jamison propose a technological dimension concerning the means chosen for intervention, which makes use of styles of protest popularised by the counter-culture of the

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31 On Resource Mobilisation Theory see for example, M. Zald and J. McCarthy, Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays, New Brunswick, Transaction, 1987. On alternative approaches emphasizing structure, identities and networks see, A. Touraine, The Voice and the Eye, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981; and A. Melucci, Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society, London, Hutchinson Radius, 1989. For an overview see, J. Cohen, 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', Social Research, Vol. 52, No. 4, 1985, pp. 663-716.

1960s, as well as seeking alternatives to destructive practices. Their third dimension is organisational, focusing on social relations and issues of participation, decentralisation and the development of non-hierarchical structures as part of a search for democratic and egalitarian forms of knowledge production.[32]

For Eyerman and Jamison each movement arises in response to problems which strike a social chord within a particular historical context. They see this as requiring movement intellectuals to formulate a theme and communicate it to a wider audience from which potential participants in the movement can be drawn. Movements then emerge when political opportunities become available, with knowledge being formed within the movement and in conflict with other groups and institutions. However, rather than examining them in terms of organisations or particular interest groups, they regard social movements primarily as creators of new conceptual spaces. Thus Eyerman and Jamison are interested in New Social Movements as bearers of new ideas, with each one articulating a chosen set of themes to create a cognitive practice which provides a collective identity.[33] As to the environmental movement, though recognising its international character and its commitment to universal goals, they note that it has adopted different forms within different national contexts.

Eyerman's and Jamison's own research on this topic, undertaken in association with Jacqueline Cramer and Jeppe Laessoe between 1984 and 1989, consisted of a comparative and historical

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32 A. Jamison, R. Eyerman, J. Cramer, and J. Laessoe, The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness: A Comparative Study of the Environmental Movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
33 R. Eyerman and A Jamison, Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach, Cambridge, Polity, 1991.

survey of the development of environmental movements in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.[34] This was largely based on documentary sources, supplemented by interviews with key actors, and some participant observation. However, their interpretation of studying movements in a historical context generally remained limited to a consideration of how national political cultures and institutional opportunities affected the form of movement activities. Even in this respect the portrayal that emerged from their chosen case countries was at best partial, as revealed by Jamison's study of Sweden, which failed to account for the Green Party's ability to develop a distinctive ecological worldview absent in the rest of the movement, which for the most part remained primarily concerned with technical and organisational issues.[35]

Eyerman and Jamison admit that their approach is not comprehensive since they are more concerned with the content of the message involved, rather than with what brought social movements about, who chose to participate in them, or what political effects they

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34 A. Jamison, R. Eyerman, J. Cramer, and J. Laessoe, The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness, op. cit.

35 Ibid., Chapter 2. Jamison characterises Sweden as an example of the incorporation of the environmental movement within a social democratic consensus. Though he notes that following the 1980 referendum on nuclear power a new environmental movement did begin to emerge, including the formation of a Green Party, he does not explain why this was not only able to break with the existing consensus and develop a distinctive ecological worldview, but even gain support for its position. In this context it is surprising that he does not mention the impact of Chernobyl, given that Sweden was the worst affected of all Western democracies. As Anthony Affigne observes, prior to 1986 the electoral performance of the Greens was poor, but they gained twenty parliamentary seats in 1988 (not 1989 as Jamison states) as well as gaining the balance of power in nine regional governments. Affigne argues that the effect of Chernobyl alone was not sufficient to explain this success, but it was the catalyst that ensured that environmental issues became central to these elections, in which the Greens were able to demonstrate that their stance on the environment was more credible than that of other parties. See, A. Affigne, 'Environmental Crisis, Green Party Power: Chernobyl and the Swedish Greens', in W. Rüdig (ed.), Green Politics One, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1990, pp. 115-152.

have achieved. Since they view their aim as investigating broader social processes this means they do not see any requirement to study actual groups such green parties. This is partly because they believe that it is not necessary to look for cognitive practice in the minds of activists involved in social movements, as they assume such participants are unlikely to be particularly aware of their beliefs, these being largely taken for granted.[36] Yet if Eyerman and Jamison have not studied actual groups it is not apparent how they know that activists are not conscious of the worldview they represent, or why they have chosen to describe their own contribution to studying social movements as being principally concerned with cognitive practice. Related to this paradox is Eyerman's and Jamison's characterisation of social movements as producers of knowledge and bearers of new ideas. At some points they seem to be saying that New Social Movements created a cognitive space for knowledge to be created, but undermine this by their assumption that activists are unaware, and by statements made elsewhere that environmental movements have emerged in response to an agenda defined by knowledge intellectuals, who in applying scientific knowledge to social problems provided the basis of a new worldview. Eyerman and Jamison do not examine the social forces leading to the formation of these intellectuals and the precise nature of their relationship with and influence upon the rest of the movement. Also, though they see New Social Movements as being created around issues, they do not explain which issues are selected and why.

Though Eyerman and Jamison claim to be drawing on the sociology of knowledge and recognise the historical location of actors,

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36 R. Eyerman and A Jamison, Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach, op. cit., p. 61.

they do not really consider how knowledge is socially produced, and ignore class as a significant factor. Indeed they reject Gouldner's suggestion that environmentalism is an ideology of a new class of intellectuals on the grounds that since environmentalism is a broadly based movement with its own specific knowledge interests, it cannot be seen as just another ideology linked to particular interest groups.[37] It may well be the case that the ideology of environmental movements cannot be explained solely in terms of class interests, but Eyerman and Jamison fail to provide convincing evidence to refute Gouldner's charge. This is because they leave too many questions unanswered - for without considering the social origins of the movement in terms of which groups were attracted, why particular issues were chosen, how participants understood these issues and sought to put them into practice, and why this took the form of a distinct political ideology - it is difficult to see how even an adequate description of the content of this new worldview can be provided. Nevertheless, one aspect of their discussion which can be seen as complementing Gouldner's analysis of the ideological functions of ecology, is Eyerman's and Jamison's emphasis on the cosmological dimension of an ecological worldview. Their suggestion that systems ecology provided a common frame of reference which could be applied to economics and social policy, will be further considered in relation to analysis of the worldview of Green Party activists in Chapter 5.

A very different approach to New Social Movements that shows more parallels with the work of Cotgrove and Duff, and Gouldner, rather than with that of Eyerman and Jamison, is the perspective favoured by Claus Offe. In writings dating from the early 1980s, he

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37 A. Jamison, R. Eyerman, J. Cramer, and J. Laessoe, The Making of the New Environmental Consciousness, op. cit., p. 2.

has also pointed to the prominent role of the New Middle Class in the New Social Movements, including the green movement, highlighting the importance of their level of education, their relative prosperity, and their occupational position in public sector services. Offe sees the educational attainment of this group as providing them with the competence to evaluate complex and abstract issues as well as encouraging independent thought, whilst their occupation makes them aware of the problems of modern life. However, Offe recognises that such movements also involve people from decommodified groups such as students, women in unpaid work, and the unemployed, reflecting their restricted life chances and flexible time budgets. Other groups identified by Offe as potential movement participants are those members of the old middle class who may share common interests such as artisans, farmers and shop owners.[38]

For Offe the issues that concern such groups include those of identity, decentralisation, the environment, and human survival, along with opposition to authoritarian control, bureaucratisation, regulation, manipulation, and dependence. Thus he sees greens and similar groups as embodying values such as autonomy, equality, solidarity and participation. Whereas internally these groups operate in an informal and egalitarian way, externally Offe sees them as confrontational, issuing demands that are largely non-negotiable, phrased in the absolute language of no, never, stop, ban, and end. Being unable to compromise makes negotiations with other groups and possible alliances difficult to achieve. Yet Offe also notes they do not see themselves as class based, aiming to represent all groups,

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38 C. Offe, 'New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics', Social Research Vol. 52, No. 4, 1985, pp. 817-868.

but though claiming to be beyond categories of left and right, Offe believes that they lack a coherent set of ideological principles.

According to Offe the values represented by groups such as the greens are not particularly new, being equivalent to the humanist and universalist concerns found in other modern political philosophies. What he sees as new is the way these groups highlight the incompatibility between competing sets of values, recognising that the dynamic of economic progress is destructive towards human needs. In this connection Offe quotes Walter Benjamin's statement that, 'Marx says revolutions are the locomotive of history. But perhaps this is not so at all. Perhaps revolutions occur when the human species, travelling in this train, reaches for the emergency brake'.[39] The point Offe is seeking to make is that the strategy of the right is to release the brakes through deregulation, whereas the greens represent an alternative rationality, a 'utopia of avoidance' in which an emphasis is placed on the preservation of valuable relationships.[40] Offe is not saying that the New Social Movements are anti-modern or seek to preserve a romantic past, but rather that they are concerned with future threats, thus constituting a modernist critique of modernisation. He does not see them as conservative because they neither uphold particularistic interests nor favour market solutions, but for Offe they cannot be seen as progressive either because he believes that they have no comprehensive vision of a new society or any realistic strategy for attaining their goals.

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39 W. Benjamin, quoted in C. Offe, 'Bindings, Shackles and Brakes: On Self-Limitation Strategies', in A. Honneth, T. McCarthy, C. Offe, and A. Wellmer (eds.), Cultural-Political Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment, London, MIT Press, 1992, p. 75.

40 C. Offe, 'Reaching for the Brake: The Greens in Germany', New Political Science, Vol. 11, 1983, pp. 45-52.

Green politics as represented by the green parties cannot be seen as absolutist or as negative as Offe implies, and neither can its ideology be dismissed as incoherent, except in so far as all ideologies contain incoherences. By operating within existing frameworks and establishing their own institutions the green parties have shown some ability to compromise and work with other groups. They can also be seen to have a distinct worldview and long term goals, even if an effective strategy to achieve them remains undeveloped. However, in recognising the involvement of decommodified groups, as well as the New Middle Class within the New Social Movements, Offe draws attention to an apparent contradiction. Whereas it is understandable that such an alliance would oppose the deregulation advocated by the right, especially regarding the consequences this has for the welfare state, Offe also notes their opposition to excessive state control and over-regulation. Using the language of Max Weber, Offe ascribes this to a disproportionate ethic of responsibility built into state institutions to which the greens respond with an ethic of conviction, thus highlighting the centrality of their critique of instrumental rationality.[41]

Green Politics and Modernity I: Jürgen Habermas

A further exploration of this contradiction is provided by Jürgen Habermas as part of his depiction of the relationship between the system and the lifeworld. In his reworking of Weberian themes Habermas portrays the lifeworld as consisting of consensual meanings

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41 C. Offe, 'Reflections on the Institutional Self-Transformation of Movement Politics: A Tentative Stage Model', in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler, Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies, Cambridge, Polity, 1990, pp. 232-250. See also, C. Offe, Contradictions of the Welfare State, London, Hutchinson, 1984, especially pp. 292-299.

and taken for granted understandings of the world. This is the sphere of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. By contrast the system is the sphere of money and power which, with the development of modern capitalism, is increasingly colonising large areas of the lifeworld through the processes of commodification and bureaucratisation. Habermas sees this as resulting in various pathologies such as excessive regulation, alienation and fragmentation, leading to experiences of losses of freedom, meaning, and identity on the part of those affected, for:

> When the substance of the foundations of life, which had up to now been taken for granted, comes into question, whether in nature, in the urban environment, in the family environment, or in the school, then phenomena of withdrawal and experiences of deprivation result, around which new lines of conflict emerge.[42]

Thus increasingly he expects to see an extension of the areas of social conflict beyond those solely concerned with problems of material reproduction or distribution, to include those whose object is to defend and strengthen the autonomy of the lifeworld.

Habermas also sees the likely agents of what amounts to a new form of politics as being drawn from the New Middle Class and other groups farthest removed from the productivist ethos of modern society, along with those affected by, or sensitive to, its destructive consequences. From his perspective the New Social Movements, including the greens, are part of an anti-productivist alliance united by a critique of economic growth and opposed to the consumerisation of the private sphere and personal lifestyles, the profit motive, the dominance of monetary values and competition. As well as resisting commodification, these groups are also against the adverse effects of

42 J. Habermas in P. Dews (ed.), Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas, London, Verso, 1992, p. 135

bureaucracy and juridification. The latter involves the extension of law into informally regulated areas, which could explain the New Social Movements' ambivalent attitudes towards the state since it is the principal agent of such processes. Habermas also notes their response to what he terms as the growth in complexity and the overburdening of the communicative infrastructure. He relates this to specific threats such as those posed by the computer storage of private data, the arms race, nuclear power, genetic engineering, and environmental destruction. In this context he states, 'These real fears, however, combine with the horror of a new category of invisible risks which can be grasped only from the vantage point of the system', thus prefiguring a theme later taken up in the work of Ulrich Beck.[43] Habermas does not see the new forms of politics resulting from such concerns as simply reactive since he acknowledges that it positively endorses notions such as equality, social justice, human rights, participation, self-realisation, and quality of life.

Habermas' observations on these issues date back to the early 1970s since he viewed the student protests of the 1960s as the forerunners of New Social Movements. He observed that the student movement with its neo-anarchist worldview was anti-authoritarian and against economies based on poverty, performance pressures, competition, possessive individualism, substitute gratifications, alienated labour, and the eradication of sensuality and aesthetic gratification, as well as being opposed to technocratic forms of domination and the bureaucratisation of life. Habermas partly

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43 J. Habermas, 'New Social Movements', Telos, 49, 1981, p. 35. See below for a discussion of Beck's work in relation to green politics.

attributed this outlook to a socialisation within subcultures freed from economic compulsion and noted that:

> To this sensibility the structural elimination of practical [moral] problems from a depoliticised public realm must become unbearable. However, it will give rise to a political force only if this sensibility comes into contact with a problem the system cannot solve.[44]

Habermas outlined three such systemic problems which he described as: the disturbance of the anthropological balance resulting in alienation and disempowerment; the disturbance of the international balance through military threats (to which could be added the issue of global inequity); and the disturbance of the ecological balance, especially through the energy crisis and pollution.[45] All three themes were to become central to green politics.

For Habermas environmental degradation is an obvious site of social irrationality, though he believes that it would be difficult for late capitalist society to limit economic growth under its present mode of organisation, as any transfer from capitalist growth to qualitative growth would necessitate the planning of production in terms of use values. Habermas tends to see the environmental crisis as requiring technical, administrative, and economic solutions implemented on a global scale. It is the destruction of local environments which he regards as being more likely to result in protests because this involves a tangible attack on the organic foundations of the lifeworld.

Thus according to Habermas the potential represented by the New Social Movements has been structurally generated. Whilst he

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44 J. Habermas, Toward a Rational Society, London, Heinemann, 1971, p. 122.
45 J. Habermas, 'What Does a Crisis Mean Today: Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism', Social Research, Vol. 40, 1973, pp. 643-667. See also, J. Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, London, Heinemann, 1976, pp. 41-44.

believes there are systemic reasons why their potential is expanding he warns that they are also weak because they occupy, 'no vital functional domains of industrial society'.[46] It was disillusionment with traditional forms of politics which led to the foundation of green parties though at the time Habermas thought it was premature for the German Greens to participate in elections, stating that 'Perhaps this experiment should have been initiated after the capacity for self organisation had developed more strongly in different autonomous spheres'.[47] As far as Habermas is concerned the reality of environmental politics has shown itself to be hardly capable of organisation, being largely confined to the extraparliamentary sphere, despite the election of a small number of representatives. He sees this as partly due to its commitment to participatory democracy and resistance to administrative control which creates constant tensions between the leadership and the grassroots membership. Habermas often seems to be exasperated by aspects of the behaviour of the Greens, and though he obviously has some sympathy with their objectives, he would rather see them in alliance with the SDP and the unions.

Because they are operating in different circumstances from the student movement, Habermas notes that the New Social Movements have been recruited from a broader social base, as well as being less articulate, more realistic, and more defensive. Whereas he sees some movements, such as the women's movement, as emancipatory in potential, most others, including the greens, he regards as

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46 J. Habermas in P. Dews (ed.), Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas, op. cit. p. 178. See also the discussion on p. 209.
47 Ibid., p. 179.

characterised by strategies of resistance and withdrawal. For Habermas such protests often take an anti-modernist form involving:

> .... young conservatives who combine their awareness of the high risks of contemporary history, their important and courageous defence of threatened life-forms, and their exploration of new ones with increasingly a kind of post-structural renunciation of reason itself.[48]

Though he sees such struggles as having 'polemical significance', he also believes them to be ultimately unrealistic. This is because they fail to separate their critique of impacts due to the growth in complexity, mediated by economic and administrative systems, from what Habermas describes as the necessity for the autonomous rationalisation of the lifeworld, thus:

> This confusion explains the mutually disruptive fronts that obscure political oppositions which are set up between the anti-modernism of the young conservatives and the new-conservative defence of a post-modernism that robs a modernism alienated from itself of its reasonable content and its possibilities for the future.[49]

It is as though Habermas cannot make up his mind about the greens. Whereas they seem to incorporate many of the themes he draws attention to, they also articulate a critique of modernity which he suspects of embodying a form of anti-modernism. Therefore, given Habermas' unshakeable commitment to the Enlightenment project, though sympathetic to their concerns, he portrays them as part of a defensive reaction or even as 'young conservatives'. Their response to attacks on the organic basis of the lifeworld and defence of threatened lifestyles and values could be interpreted in these terms, but this neglects his observation that the New Social Movements do

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48 J. Habermas, 'Dialectics of Rationalisation: An Interview With Jürgen Habermas', Telos, 49, 1981, p. 15.
49 J. Habermas, 'New Social Movements', op. cit., p. 37

embody universal modern values, including modern conceptions of social justice drawn from bourgeois and socialist sources.

Habermas also overlooks the utopian aspect of green politics with its aim of creating an entirely new kind of society which will enable people to live life as they believe it should be lived, not merely returning to some image of life as it was. As he admits, the New Social Movements are not merely defending existing lifestyles threatened by colonisation, they are also seeking to put new ones into practice. This parallels Habermas' own belief that the rationalisation of the lifeworld will allow the creation of alternative lifestyles, as well as encouraging reflexive and critical attitudes on the part of those socialised into them. His developmental model envisages a final stage of moral and political freedom encompassing the idea of a good society, which most greens would wholeheartedly endorse. Describing this ideal society Habermas states:

> The "pursuit of happiness" might one day mean something different - for example, not accumulating material objects of which one disposes privately, but bringing about social relations in which mutuality predominates and satisfaction does not mean the triumph of one over the repressed needs of the other.[50]

There are echoes here of themes raised by Herbert Marcuse concerning issues of need and satisfaction, though marked differences exist between them in conceptualising the relationship between society and nature. Marcuse advocated a democratic transformation of technology to result in an alternative attitude towards nature in which it would be regarded as a partner in an interactive relationship, rather than as an object of domination. Habermas' response is that, 'the achievements of technology, which are

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50 J. Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, London, Heinemann, 1979, p. 199.

indispensable as such, could surely not be substituted for by an awakened nature', thus denying the possibility of a new technology.[51]

As part of his reformulation of Weber's concept of rationalisation, Habermas argues that Weber placed too much emphasis on the dominance of instrumental rationality and neglected the continuing influence of value rationality. Yet whilst Habermas believes that human relations must be characterised by a communicative rationality embodying universal values, at the same time he insists that the only possible relationship with the environment is an instrumental one. It is on this point that an area of potential conflict opens up between Habermas and the greens, because in their opposition to the forces of instrumental rationality, they seek to incorporate the very universal values which Habermas is advocating, but want to extend these to allow an ethical relationship with the non-human world. Though for Habermas the environmental crisis is crucial, even of 'epochal significance', requiring drastic action, he can only conceive of solutions in terms of technocratic and instrumental action. For those greens who believe it is this very instrumentalism which has created the problem in the first place, such a stance is highly problematic. Thus Habermas' ambivalence towards green politics can be related to his conceptualisation of nature and his understanding of human relations with the environment.

Habermas believes that what we know about nature is defined by the cognitive attitude informing scientific inquiry, which is instrumental. This explains his view that there is, 'only one theoretically fruitful attitude towards nature', which is informed by

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51 J. Habermas, Toward a Rational Society, op. cit., p. 88.

an interest in technical control.[52] Also related to this is Habermas' critique of theoretical perspectives which have sought to reformulate the relationship of humanity and nature, as in his statement that:

> The resurrection of nature cannot be logically conceived within materialism, no matter how much the early Marx and the speculative minds of the Marxist tradition (Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Theodore W. Adorno) find themselves attracted by this heritage of mysticism.[53]

A similar position is apparent in Habermas' typology of the lifeworld where only some spheres are granted the potential for rationalisation and the accumulation of knowledge. He thus excludes this possibility as regards the category covering interactions with external nature. Since Habermas does not believe that fraternal relations with a non-objectified nature can be given a rational or institutionalised form, the outcome of such an outlook is equated with mystical worldviews.[54] It is this same objection to which Habermas invariably returns in such discussions, which colours not only his response to other theorists whom he regards as potentially undermining the Enlightenment project, but also applies to his attitude to similar positions associated with green politics.

However, as Thomas McCarthy has noted, Habermas' own formulation in this area contains a major contradiction in that whilst nature is regarded as the object of a knowing human subject, he has to acknowledge that humanity has evolved from nature, which implies that nature could also be seen as a potential ground of subjectivity.

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52 J. Habermas quoted in P. Dews (ed.), Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas, op. cit. p. 174.
53 J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, London, Heinemann, 1972, pp. 32-33.
54 J. Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, Cambridge, Polity, 1986, pp. 236-238.

According to McCarthy this is a problem for which Habermas has been unable to provide a satisfactory solution.[55] Though Habermas accepts that humanity is a product of evolution, and grounded in the, 'physical constitution of this natural being and some constants of its environment',[56] he does not believe that nature can be encountered as an end in itself, able to set limits on human interests.[57] Yet he does grant nature an autonomous status in that:

> The unity of the social subject and nature that comes into being "in industry" cannot eradicate the autonomy of nature .... As the correlate of social labour, objectified nature retains both independence and externality in relation to the subject that controls it .... No matter how far our power of technical control over nature is extended, nature retains a substantial core that does not reveal itself to us.[58]

Habermas further argues that, 'we do reckon with the existence of a reality that is independent of men who can act instrumentally and arrive at a consensus about statements. But what the predication of properties catches "of" this reality is constituted only in the perspective of possible technical control'.[59] This reaffirms his view that any understanding of external reality can only be gained through instrumental action, but in granting an autonomous status to nature he surely raises a further problem for if nature is independent the possibility exists that in some circumstances it could impose limits on human action.

In other contexts Habermas has argued that, 'access to a symbolically prestructured reality cannot be gained by observation

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55 T. McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas, Cambridge, Polity, 1984, pp. 110-125.
56 J. Habermas, Theory and Practice, London, Heinemann, 1974, p. 27.
57 J. Habermas, 'A Reply to my Critics', in J. Thompson and D. Held, Habermas: Critical Debates, Cambridge, Polity, 1982, p. 241.
58 J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, op. cit., p. 33.
59 Ibid., p. 130.

alone',[60] but as William Outhwaite has noted this would seem to rule out methodological dualism, which would also suggest that the natural and human sciences cannot be entirely separated. Outhwaite also argues that, 'If realism is a possible theory of science, let alone a better one than various alternatives, it becomes less easy for Habermas to establish a tight connection between the empirical claim that science and technology involve the domination of nature and the "quasi-transcendental" claim that this orientation is what establishes the meaning of scientific statements about the natural world'.[61] Thus perhaps Habermas' theoretical reasons for justifying the instrumental domination of nature are not on as secure a ground as he would have us believe.

Others have also taken issue with Habermas' theoretical position that nature can only be known as an object to be controlled. For Habermas it is language that raises humans above the rest of nature. His notion of communicative rationality, which he conceives of in linguistic terms, contains a normative component to provide it with an ethical basis. Given that such a communicative ethic is taken to exclude the possibility that nature can be understood as an end in itself, and only perceives value in terms of what benefits humans, Joel Whitebook has asked how this ethic could successfully oppose the ecologically destructive consequences of the application of science and technology. Arguing that, 'Habermas is, in short, an anti-reductionist for the human sciences and a reductionist for the life sciences', Whitebook calls for the transformation of our knowledge and relationship with nature in order to see it as possessing

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60 J. Habermas, quoted in W. Outhwaite, Habermas: A Critical Introduction, Cambridge, Polity, 1994, p. 23
61 W. Outhwaite, ibid., pp. 35-36.

meaning, purpose, and value.[62] Whilst Habermas does not discuss ecological ethics as such, in a reply to Whitebook, he states that it is possible to have compassion for, or solidarity with nature, but though this could serve an aesthetic function, it could not become an ethic in any normative sense.[63] Thus Habermas effectively denies that the relationship with nature can be communicative or have an ethical basis.

Arguing from a stance sympathetic to green politics, John Dryzek contends that a resurrection of nature need not take a mystical form since understanding the complexity of ecological systems requires the accumulation of knowledge. He submits that there are grounds for extending the notion of communicative rationality to encompass an ecological dimension. Part of Dryzek's case is that intersubjective discourse requires ecological as well as linguistic criteria in that the environment mediates communication. He also suggests that recognising that the natural world in some senses possesses agency would undercut subject-object dualism. In this context he points to the existence of complex feedback mechanisms which are part of self-regulating systems, forms of non-linguistic communication that cross the species barrier, and the recognition that humans are a part of nature. For Dryzek all of these factors could be seen as raising the possibility of the development of ecological sensitivity through practices which are holistic and experimental.[64]

In most areas Habermas has shown a willingness to meet his critics half-way, but on this issue he has remained immovable. Rather than responding to the points being made, for the most part

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62 J. Whitebook, 'The Problem of Nature in Habermas', Telos, 40, Summer 1979, p. 59.
63 J. Habermas, 'A Reply to my Critics', op. cit., p. 250.
64 J. Dryzek, 'Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere', Environmental Ethics, Vol. 12, 1990, pp. 195-210.

he merely restates his existing position. Recent developments in the ecological sciences have not caused him to alter his view, for:

> The awareness of ecological cycles, of biotypes, of human-environment systems has certainly brought forward new themes, new questions, perhaps even new disciplines. As far as I can tell, however, from the methodological point of view these ecologically inspired questions move entirely within an inherited framework. So far nothing seems to suggest that alternative natural sciences can be developed in a non-objectifying attitude, for example in the performative attitude of a partner in communication - theories in the tradition of the romantic or alchemistic philosophies of nature.[65]

Thus despite attempts to challenge current scientific and technological practice in the light of the ecological crisis, Habermas continues in what he sees as a defence of science against romantic views of nature.

Green Politics and Modernity II: Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens

Whilst Habermas views nature as an objective external reality, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens both adopt a more social constructionist perspective. As was noted above, following the observation by Habermas concerning the threat posed to the lifeworld by invisible risks, more recently Beck has expanded this into a whole theory of risk as the defining characteristic of modern society. Put briefly his thesis is that, as a consequence of overproduction and overconsumption, modern society is undergoing a transformation from industrial society to a risk society characterised by the manufacture of irreversible threats to humans, animals and plants.[66] These risks, such as those posed by nuclear waste, pollution, and toxins in food,

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65 J. Habermas in P. Dews (ed.), Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas, op. cit. p. 174.
66 U. Beck Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity, London, Sage, 1992.

operate on a global scale and cannot be tied to any place of origin. In coming to terms with risk, Beck expects that modernisation will inevitably become reflexive as it is increasingly confronted by its own hazardous products. Since such risks are often invisible, it is only through scientific knowledge that they become perceptible, but he sees science as having a contradictory role for, as well as identifying and solving risks, it is simultaneously one of the major causes of them. Beck notes that this is likely to result in competing rationality claims as existing scientific practice is exposed to criticism, leading to the development of counter-expertise as protest groups themselves mobilise alternative scientific arguments. Since this process is open to social definition and construction, he is also aware that such issues are not just scientific, since they address questions of power, distribution, rationality and ethical norms.

Hence the elimination of hazard becomes political, yet Beck believes this results in an unbinding of politics as the boundary between political and non-political become blurred. For example, he contends that the technical and economic spheres lose their supposed non-political character as the unstoppable forces they unleash increasingly shape people's lives. Thus many crucial decisions are taken outside the political sphere without adequate regulation, resulting in a widespread popular discontent with institutional politics because of this apparent failure to control events. This leads to the growth of what Beck describes as sub-politics, which includes demands for participation arising from a new political culture represented by the New Social Movements. So, far from regarding this as a manifestation of counter-modernity, he sees the development of alternative forms of politics as evidence of a new reflexive modernity challenging the unintended consequences of progress. For

Beck, what initially appears as a retreat into private life is actually part of a struggle for a new definition of the political, involving the creation of new identities and practices, and the expression of norms which address questions of trust and how we wish to live.

Though the environmental movement constitutes an obvious example of such developments, and indeed is the only one to which he substantially refers, Beck's portrayal of this appears to contradict his positive general assessment of the reflexive character of sub-politics. Echoing Offe's discussion of Benjamin, and Offe's concept of a 'utopia of avoidance', Beck believes that a desire for safety can create a 'solidarity of anxiety'. However, unlike Offe, Beck sees this as a predominantly defensive reaction which does not provide an adequate basis for collective political action, since it could easily lead to authoritarian solutions to hazard prevention. Thus Beck seems to be suggesting that fear is the motivating force behind the environmental and peace movements. He also notes that since there remains a broad social consensus in favour of progress for the perceived benefits it brings, those highlighting risks can be seen as alarmist by those seeking to deny risks or profit from them, the implication being that the environmental movement is overwhelmingly negative in outlook. Beck even suggests that the greens are not aware of the social determination of risk and, whilst adopting a broadly anti-technological stance, at the same time they are prone to using scientific arguments to support their case, which leads him to infer that they are technological determinists. This enables Beck to state his belief that protest must be transferred from technical issues towards impacts on social and cultural life, since, 'people who protest do so against a perceived threat, not to the environment, but to their

social habitus'.[67] In this he is seemingly agreeing with Habermas, though elsewhere Beck states that environmental problems have their source within the foundations of instrumental rationality at the centre of industrial society, and not in the marginal zones that overlap with the lifeworld, which would suggest an analysis more in line with the view taken by Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno.[68] Yet where Horkheimer and Adorno argued that a crisis has arisen because nature has become desocialised and the human world denaturalised, Beck adopts a contrary stance.[69]

Though the theory of risk society requires a reformulation of the relationship between nature and society, for Beck nature has become socialised to the extent that it can no longer be regarded as something outside society to be subdued, thus environmental problems have become purely social problems. This is because, 'The process of interaction with nature has consumed it, abolished it, and transformed it into a civilizing meta-reality that can no longer rid itself of the attributes of human (co-) creation'.[70] He further states that, 'The very concept of nature is a self-negating human invention', and now merely serves as 'the bolt-hole of anti-modernism'.[71] In seeking to rediscover a memory of nature that no longer exists, Beck sees the ecology movement as suffering from a 'naturalistic misapprehension of itself'.[72] Yet there is a fundamental contradiction at the basis of his

67 U. Beck, Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk, Cambridge, Polity, 1995, p. 159.
68 U. Beck, 'The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization', in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order, Cambridge, Polity, 1994, p. 10.
69 For a summary and critique of the stance adopted by Horkheimer and Adorno see, J. Habermas, 'The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment', New German Critique, No. 26, Spring/Summer 1982, pp. 13-30.
70 U. Beck, Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk, op. cit. p. 37.
71 Ibid., p. 38 and p. 39.
72 Ibid., p. 38.

theory in that on the one hand he is saying that risks and environmental destruction are real, but on the other that nature is a construct. It must also be said that Beck's understanding of environmental issues is rather weak; for example he repeatedly confuses ozone depletion and global warming.[73] There is also a paradox in that he seems to want to reduce the role of actual environmental problems as generating concerns, as though ecological politics is rather a response to a moral crisis. So whilst Beck accepts that concern over nature can in part be related to the extent of its destruction, he prefers to explain the reasons for the high levels of ecological awareness in prosperous Western societies in terms of a search for alternative values to the rat-race of modern life. From this perspective, with the undermining of the guiding assumptions of social life, nature can come to be seen as a source of truth. This would explain why the search for authenticity and meaning has focused on areas such as nature and intimate relationships. Thus Beck believes that, 'The ecological movement is not an environmental movement but a social inward movement which utilises "nature" as a parameter for certain questions'.[74]

Though Beck is undoubtedly correct when he states that the destruction of nature provides a basis for a moral critique of society, and encourages the exploration of alternative lifestyles, his overall account of environmental politics remains abstract in that his work is not sufficiently grounded in the practices of actual groups. This, combined with the attempt to explain environmental politics in terms of his theoretical perspective, results in a portrayal that is often contradictory. Though he acknowledges that the critique of the

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73 U. Beck, Ecological Enlightenment: Essays on the Politics of the Risk Society, Atlantic Highlands New Jersey, 1995, p. 5 and p. 8.
74 U. Beck, Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk, op. cit., p. 55.

negative consequences of modernity is most prevalent amongst educated middle class groups in prosperous societies benefitting from extensive welfare provision, Beck wants to situate environmental politics as a grassroots movement which has originated outside institutional frameworks and is not tied to classes or parties. This is perhaps because he wants to downplay class dimensions in line with his theoretical perspective which suggests that risk positions are replacing class positions, even though those expressing the most concern are not those at greatest risk.

Also, though Beck initially indicates that those articulating such concerns are a manifestation of reflexive modernity, he then provides an image of the environmental movement as simultaneously naively anti-technological, yet conceiving of solutions in technological and naturalistic terms. He thus sees them as failing to address issues of power, distribution, bureaucratic rationality and norms, but this does not prevent him from subsequently declaring that they represent a moral critique of society and a search for alternative values. Beck also argues that they do not recognise the link between ecology and democracy when this has been central to most green discourse. In this respect he fails to discuss the actual practice of green politics as manifested by the green parties or the kind of alternative society which they wish to bring into being, except to commend Joschka Fischer of *Die Grünen* for pursuing a pragmatic and realist approach to make the Greens more electable, only to criticise the limits of pragmatism.[75] Beck's own answer to these problems seems to require an extension of legal regulation combined with greater democratic accountability. However, he seems to envisage the politics of the future as being in the hands of lawyers, businessmen and scientists

75 U. Beck, Ecological Enlightenment, op. cit., p. 110.

as parliamentary democracy is superseded. Beck does not discuss the mechanism by which democratisation could be achieved, or suggest how citizens could control corporate interests who favour the proliferation of destructive technologies, hence his own political alternative remains somewhat naive. Whilst Beck's work does bring the environment into the centre of sociological debate, what initially appears as a theory with something to say about green politics, actually contributes little to an understanding of this phenomenon.

Another account strongly influenced by Beck is that of Anthony Giddens, whose more recent writings place a major emphasis on the emergence of life politics. He seeks to distinguish this from emancipatory politics which advocates equality, justice, participation and autonomy, as well as seeking liberation from oppression and exploitation. Whilst accepting that life politics is predicated on such concerns, Giddens sees this as going a stage further in that it focuses on personal growth in the form of issues of choice, lifestyle and self-actualisation. Indeed he suggests that life politics in turn raises emancipatory questions about access to the means of self-actualisation which is restricted by the material inequalities generated by capitalism. For Giddens this attempt to make the personal political involves concern over issues to do with the body, reproduction, sexuality and relations with the environment. Like Beck, Giddens recognises that whilst ecological awareness is partly promoted by evidence of destruction, it is also the result of changes in attitude, since resolving environmental problems will require the adoption of new lifestyle patterns which replace the need for material accumulation with a quest for personal growth. As well as rejecting economic growth, consumerism and commodification, this outlook incorporates knowledge of the global consequences of personal

actions, and the awareness that there is nowhere to escape to. However, Giddens sees life politics as being about more than just survival because it addresses moral and existential questions neglected by current institutional practice, and even suggests possible methods of transition towards an alternative way of life. Thus in challenging the consequences of modernity, and raising questions of how we should live, he believes life politics represents a move towards greater reflexivity.[76] Giddens goes on to outline his own version of a reconstituted radical politics which highlights the centrality of life politics. He sees this as operating through the generation of new types of solidarity based on individual autonomy, responsibility and the promotion of active trust. This would involve the reflexive mobilisation of society by creating public arenas within which forms of dialogic democracy could be encouraged. Whilst much of this scenario is no doubt highly admirable, Giddens is rather vague about the precise institutional form this would take, what means would be required to achieve it, and which agents could possibly effect such a social transformation.

In this respect Giddens' account of green politics is highly revealing when juxtaposed with the agenda discussed above. He not only recognises the green movement as the political force with the strongest claim to take on the inheritance of the radical left, but also sees it as embodying themes common to 'philosophic conservatism', such as social solidarity, conservation, and the protection of continuity between generations. This does not mean that Giddens sees green ideas as necessarily having a privileged affinity with socialism, conservatism, or indeed liberalism. Rather he regards it as

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76 A. Giddens, Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age, Cambridge, Polity, 1991, especially Chapter 7.

symptomatic of a realignment currently taking place within contemporary politics as part of a response to processes of globalisation and reflexive modernisation. Initially Giddens seemed to have a positive evaluation of the green movement, suggesting that it incorporated many of the concerns of life politics. This was because he recognised that ecological concerns were not just a response to high consequence risks, but focused on issues such as democratic participation, demilitarisation, the humanisation of technology, whilst questioning economic polarisation, commodification, and the growth ethic, to the extent of suggesting the possibility of a post scarcity order on 'the other side of capitalism'. Giddens also acknowledged that the green movement has sought to bring a moral dimension into the relationship between society and the environment, replacing the existing instrumental approach.[77]

However, Giddens has come to reject green politics as a way forward since, 'it depends for its proposals on calling for a reversion to nature. Yet nature no longer exists!'[78] Following Beck, he notes that nature has only become a political cause at the moment of its disappearance, and that the green movement is vulnerable to a 'naturalistic misapprehension' of itself. Giddens maintains that the colonisation of the natural world has effectively brought nature to an end as a realm external to human knowledge, though a counter argument to this point would be that much of nature remains a realm external to human ignorance, given that humans do not even know the full extent of what they are destroying. Whilst he accepts that nature has not passed completely under human control, Giddens

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77 A. Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity, Cambridge, Polity, 1990, pp. 161-171.
78 A. Giddens, Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics, Cambridge, Polity, 1994, p. 11.

asserts that the socialisation of nature cannot be undone, nor can it be seen as a source of values. This is because practical and ethical issues cannot be interpreted in terms of natural criteria for nature is unable to provide answers to problems arising from human intervention. Nevertheless, Giddens does acknowledge that the control of nature has limits to the extent that it reveals existential issues concerning not just how humans can survive, but also what responsibilities they have towards nature. He agrees that humanity should minimise impacts on the environment, and he does recognise that ecological concern highlights aesthetic and ethical responsibilities to human and non-human life. To this extent Giddens allows that it offers a means for the re-moralisation of society, whilst a move away from productivism has the potential to encourage more satisfying alternatives based on universal values such as autonomy and the pursuit of happiness.

Despite this Giddens warns against taking green theory at face value, since there are many versions of it, not all of which are consistent with each other. However, his discussion of what he perceives to be the inadequacies and contradictions inherent to green theories remains oversimplistic.[79] Giddens dismisses as unrealistic deep ecology's call for an end to industrial society, but does not consider more plausible green agendas for creating a sustainable society. He also criticises what he sees as an implicit claim to the effect that the protection of the biosphere should be related to the revival or reinvention of social and cultural traditions, yet he adopts a similar position in his own discussion of life politics. Giddens rejects, as unsupported by the anthropological evidence, assumptions that those peoples living closer to nature experience a more

79 Ibid., Chapter 8.

harmonious relationship with it than people in modern societies, though he provides no evidence to the contrary himself. He even suggests that nature only becomes beneficent when subject to human control. This leads to the argument that mastery over nature may mean destroying it to the extent that it is no longer natural, but apparently this is not the same as harming the environment. Giddens thus contends that mastery over nature involves a caring relationship as well as requiring instrumental action, though he does not seem to have considered how absurd this argument would sound if terms such as women or indigenous peoples were substituted for nature.

Another aspect of his critique of radical ecology relates to its advocacy of decentralisation, which Giddens interprets as implying the absence of any central authority. He sees this as contradictory since the solution of large scale environmental problems would undoubtedly require a co-ordinated approach involving centralised institutions. Yet Giddens does not consider how greens have envisaged decentralisation as operating, which certainly would not rule out institutional responses at state and international levels where this was appropriate. He also understands decentralisation as involving the disappearance of cities and the creation of small local communities to reduce environmental impact and to facilitate greater democratic participation. This allows Giddens to argue that small communities can be parochial, restricting diversity and repressing individual freedom, but since a large proportion of greens choose to live in cities, whilst their outlook privileges core values of diversity and personal freedom, this criticism is difficult to sustain.

The problem with all of these points is that where Giddens begins by recognising that greens adopt different positions which contradict each other, his discussion seems to forget this and implies

that they all want the same thing. This fault is compounded by his reliance on the writings of a combination of deep ecologists and the social ecology of Murray Bookchin to make his case, even though these sources cannot be seen as representative of the outlook and practice of the majority of those directly involved in green politics. This is also apparent in his contention that the greens simply want to go back to nature, but nowhere does Giddens provide evidence that significant numbers of them seek to do so. So though he agrees that a transformation of the relationship with the environment must be part of any revival of radical politics, he insists that this must be integrated with wider social agendas. Yet elsewhere Giddens fully acknowledges that green politics does address social concerns. If he were to investigate more closely what kind of society most greens want to create, he would find that it incorporates many of the themes of life politics which he is advocating, though green politics tends to combine these with emancipatory concerns, for ultimately it is difficult to see how the two can meaningfully be separated. Thus the account of green politics provided by Giddens, like that of Beck and Habermas, is contradictory for whilst on the one hand he sees the greens as representing a reflexive modernity, on the other he believes that they demonstrate counter-modernist tendencies in that he understands them as wanting to go back to nature. This perceived tension revealed in theoretical portrayals of green politics, between modernity and counter-modernity, and between left and right, will be further explored in the next section.

III: Left, Right, Backwards or Forwards: Theories on the Political Location of Green Ideology

As well as those investigations which seek to describe different forms of green politics, or explain it in terms of the structural influences operating on those involved, a third group of commentators adopt a more evaluative or even polemical approach. Such perspectives generally take the form of analysing the position of green politics in relation to other political ideologies, and by considering if it can be seen as a movement of the left or right, or whether, as some greens claim, it cannot be categorised in these terms. As it will be seen another characteristic of such accounts is that they often involve some attempt to appropriate aspects of green politics to their own preferred position.

In response to the question of whether the outlook of the ecology movement manages to transcend existing political divisions to the extent that it constitutes a distinctive worldview, writing in 1990 Alan Scott argues that the ideological outlook of the greens does represent a new synthesis, but one that retains continuities with previously existing anti-capitalist and anti-industrial ideologies.[80] He also sees it as reproducing ideological divisions between left and right. Using *Die Grünen* as an example, Scott notes that it emerged from a diverse set of ideological perspectives, including both rightist and leftist elements. This was perhaps the case in its initial phase, though Scott does not make clear that the conservative wing was a relatively tiny group which withdrew once the party began to take an obviously leftist stance on social issues.

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80 A. Scott, Ideology and the New Social Movements, London, Unwin Hyman, 1990

Scott also fails to extend his argument convincingly into his discussion of the later factional split between the realist and fundamentalist wings of the Party. Whereas he sees this as a continuation of left-right divisions, it is uncertain which group could be seen as representative of the left and which of the right since the reformist 'realos' included a number of the Party's more prominent Marxists, whilst the revolutionary 'fundis' wished to overthrow industrial capitalism entirely. Given the ambiguities in the positions of these two groups it is not apparent that they can be simply understood in terms of a left-right division. This undermines part of Scott's argument that ideological cleavages of left and right continue to differentiate ecological ideologies. This may be so in some cases, but not in others, as will be seen in the discussion on this topic in Chapter 6. Scott is undoubtedly correct when he points to the high degree of diversity of aims and ideology within the green movement as a whole, and in stating that, 'ecological debates demonstrate the degree of cross-fertilisation which exists between competing ideological discourses'.[81] Though showing that political ecology can be highly ideologically contestable, Scott does not really answer his first question, for in focusing on diversity, contradictions and continuities with other ideologies, he fails to distinguish what might be new or distinctive about green ideology and the extent to which its advocates, especially within the green parties, share a common worldview.

A much earlier account which takes a very different approach is that of Philip Lowe and Michael Worboys who sought to examine the upsurge in environmental concern in the 1970s in terms of the

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81 Ibid., p. 106.

meanings that those involved attached to these concerns.[82] To do this they adopted Cotgrove's definition of contemporary environmentalism as a single coherent movement consisting of those who, '.... openly challenge what is in many ways the central or master-value in industrial society - the primacy of economic goals - and set against these welfare values which are incompatible with or in conflict with purely economic ends'.[83] A key element of this challenge identified by Lowe and Worboys relates to the environmental movement's ambivalent attitude towards science, which on the one hand is seen as contributing towards adverse environmental consequences, whilst on the other it is also able to reveal the extent of such impacts and provide potential solutions. Lowe and Worboys further argue that one branch of science, ecology, has become a source of values for environmentalists who interpret it as an ideology of nature and wholeness, which can be extended from the study of ecosystems to be applied to the interaction of human societies and the environment. In this reading of popular ecology as ideology it is interpreted as advocating harmony, balance and interdependence, whilst rejecting conflict. Lowe and Worboys detect within this a form of the end of ideology thesis, one consequence of which could be the masking of social conflicts by contending that conventional political allegiances are superseded in the face of the environmental crisis.

According to Lowe and Worboys, 'The Ecology Party is particularly concerned with the disorder and pathological condition of

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82 P. Lowe and M. Worboys, 'Ecology and Ideology', in F. Buttel and H. Newby (eds.), The Rural Sociology of Advanced Societies: Critical Perspectives, London, Croom Helm, 1980, pp. 433-452.
83 Ibid. p. 434. For the original source see, S. Cotgrove, 'Environmentalism and Utopia', Sociological Review, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, 1976, pp. 23-42.

modern industrial society', and advocates, 'decentralised, self regulating communities to achieve social and ecological balance'.[84] They supplement this reading with quotations from the writings of Edward Goldsmith and Garrett Harding to show that such a vision necessitates the recreation of organic social relations of a gemeinschaft-type in which individual freedoms become subjugated to the community in a form of mutual coercion. Thus Lowe and Worboys see popular ecology as a fundamentally conservative response to a perceived social decline of Western societies, which advocates a return to the values, practices and authority structures of traditional societies, using the science of ecology to legitimate such a solution. The environmental movement has undoubtedly drawn on the science of ecology in formulating its analysis of the issues facing modern societies to the extent that this could be regarded as an integral component of what might be termed a green ideology. Yet, unlike Scott, Lowe and Worboys fail to distinguish between the different ways in which ecology has been interpreted from different political perspectives within the green movement. Whilst there may be common areas of concern, contemporary environmentalism does not constitute a single coherent movement, there being considerable differences regarding issues of strategy and political outlook.

Many of the problematic aspects of the arguments given by Lowe and Worboys result from ignoring this diversity within the green movement. For example they state that popular ecology portrays itself as taking an apolitical stance because existing political alignments are regarded as inadequate by the movement, yet Lowe and Worboys see no contradiction in supporting this statement by selectively quoting from an Ecology Party document that is part of a

84 Ibid. p. 445.

programme to radically transform society through political action. Such a programme also counters the contention of Lowe and Worboys that popular ecology seeks technical solutions rather than social, political or economic ones. As to the charge made by Lowe and Worboys that beneath this supposed apolitical stance, popular ecology is fundamentally conservative in that it is concerned with imposing social order and restricting personal freedoms, such an agenda can be discerned within the writings of Harding and Goldsmith. However, Ecology Party documents constantly stress the need for extending democratic participation and reducing social inequalities as an integral component of the creation of a decentralised society, whilst a commitment to personal freedom, albeit within a framework of social responsibility, has continued to be a central feature of its ideological outlook. Thus the failure of Lowe and Worboys to adequately differentiate between the political positions advocated by their chosen sources, means that their account remains over-generalised, misrepresenting the stance taken by groups such as the Ecology Party.

Marxist Perspectives on Green Politics

The analysis provided by Lowe and Worboys was strongly influenced by Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 'A Critique of Political Ecology' which since it was written in 1974 has remained one of the most seminal and prescient discussions of the topic.[85] Applying a Marxist critique to the ideologies arising from the emerging ecology movement, Enzensberger highlighted class dimensions and hidden agendas underlying much of the rhetoric. In terms of the ideology of this

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85 H.M. Enzensberger, 'A Critique of Political Ecology', New Left Review, No. 84, 1974, pp. 3-31.

new perspective, Enzensberger notes that where scientific ecology studies the mutual interdependence or state of balance between animal, insect and plant species within an ecosystem, political ecology, in seeking to extend such an analysis to human societies, concludes that industrialisation is bringing about an ecological catastrophe. Though scientific credibility is claimed for such a view, far from being neutral, Enzensberger contends that this message is interpreted by way of the class interests of those promoting it. He supports this by arguing that though industrialisation has always resulted in adverse impacts on the environment and health in working class areas, it was only when the middle classes were similarly affected as the crisis became a universal one, that the environment became a political issue.

Enzensberger identifies three main groups articulating environmental concerns. Firstly there are the technocrats largely operating within the state apparatus who favour technical fixes to prevent economic and social conflict. Being motivated by political interests they seek to manipulate the ecological movement, but cannot really be seen as part of it. Secondly there are those, mostly consisting of the new petty bourgeoisie, who are involved in citizens initiatives or single issue campaigns. These tend to begin with rather limited objectives such as solving local environmental problems, though as these increase in scale Enzensberger sees such groups as having the potential to become part of a mass movement able to exert a significant political influence. Enzensberger's third group are the eco-freaks, whose class background he describes as reduced middle class, noting continuities between their outlook and that of the hippies of the 1960s. He is rather disparaging about this group, portraying them as marginal, obscurantist and sectarian, and

describing them as being involved in a movement away from the cities to seek a more natural way of life, such as by forming rural communes and growing their own food. Enzensberger is perhaps too dismissive of the last group neglecting the diversity of activities in which they were involved, and overestimating the extent to which they can be separated from the second group, since both currents can be seen as having combined in the formation of green parties. Yet for the time when this paper was written this was a remarkably far-sighted analysis in that all three groups had a significant influence on the shape taken by an emerging green politics.

For Enzensberger, political ecology's tendency to ignore the social and historical dimension of environmental problems results in a state of false consciousness. This is apparent in his analysis of the image of spaceship earth which is invariably used to suggest that everyone is affected, whilst failing to acknowledge that socio-economic position differentially affects the life chances of those on board. Thus Enzensberger sees such global projections as legitimising class interests and exploitation without adequately addressing the issue of the distribution of resources. He also regards the growth in concern over the environmental crisis as a symptom of a bourgeois society that has lost faith in the future and equates its own collapse with the end of the world. Hence it looks to the past as a source of values, but the irony is that it is the actions of this class which has helped destroy the very things it now declares itself as seeking to conserve. However, as this does not seem to prevent it conducting business as usual, Enzensberger sees room to doubt the sincerity of such sentiments. He further points to another possible dimension in that with the decline of religion, nature is seen as a providing a sense of meaning. Enzensberger relates this to the role of those

scientists seeking to influence the public, who in acting as the prophets of ecology, predict doom and disaster unless people seek redemption, thus adopting the techniques of religious conversion. Yet whilst the alternative presented seemingly requires radical change in the way people live their lives, he detects an implicit assumption that this can take place by working through existing political institutions. Because of this Enzensberger argues that the ecological movement will fail to be politically effective as long as it pursues single issues without challenging vested interests and seeking changes in social, political and economic structures.

As an example Enzensberger cites the programme put forward by Paul and Anne Ehrlich which called for the application of electoral pressure on the political system and the possible formation of ecological parties.[86] As will be seen in Chapter 3, a similar statement by Paul Ehrlich directly influenced the foundation of what was to become the Green Party. In that green parties go beyond single issues, have developed a social and economic critique, and do seek to transform structures, depending on what evaluation is made of their potential to effect significant change, it is arguable whether such a strategy is necessarily as depoliticising as Enzensberger implies. Perhaps more telling in this connection is his argument that the ecological movement has neglected the class dimension and that it is only when environmental concerns become relevant to the working class that mass mobilisations will occur. In response to this point it is certainly the case that though the environmental movement, including the green parties, have sought to make popular appeals on a non-class basis, they have also demonstrated a commitment to

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86 Ibid. p. 24. For the original source see, P. and A. Ehrlich, Population, Resources, Environment: Issues in Human Ecology, San Francisco, W.H. Freeman, 1970, pp. 322-4.

equity and social justice, and an awareness of the connections between environmental degradation, poverty and uneven development. Though the struggle for an improved environment contains anti-capitalist elements since it requires changes to the material base of production, Enzensberger warns that it could also provide a new growth area for capitalism with costs offloaded onto the public. However, he foresees that such technological solutions will merely create further problems because these address symptoms rather than causes. A more disturbing alternative postulated by Enzensberger is that a worsening ecological crisis may lead to resource wars, authoritarianism and repression involving appeals for sacrifice and reduced consumption for the common good.

Enzensberger's charges are certainly valid ones, though he is also aware that such a critique of ideology is vulnerable to becoming a form of ideology itself. As he notes, being able to specify the interests involved does not negate the reality of the environmental crisis. He is critical of the left's failure to address this issue and of the common assumption that, since capitalism is to blame, a socialist revolution will automatically eliminate the problem. In this respect Enzensberger argues that Marxism needs to extend its analysis of capitalism since it is not enough to merely replace the class who own the means of production. Rather there must be a full re-evaluation of Marx's commitment to technological progress in order to transform the productive forces which have been shaped by capitalist social relations, and only then will formulating a less hostile relationship between people and environment become a possibility. Enzensberger is also critical of socialist expectations of future abundance, given that the present consumer society is based on expropriating the Third World and future generations. He also suggests that hopes of

liberation may have to give way to the constraints of necessity, for though political ecology is naive in many respects, this cannot be said concerning its recognition of the centrality of issues of survival and human need.

Most subsequent studies of the politics of the environment from a Marxist perspective have tended to follow Enzensberger's critique of the interests underlying such concerns, without substantially addressing his call for a reformulation of Marxist analysis in the light of the ecological crisis. A notable exception is Ted Benton's recent critical re-examination of Marxist theory in the light of environmental concerns.[87] He notes that Marx did not write in a consistent way about the relationship between society and nature, so whilst it is possible to find parts of Marx's writings that show his awareness of environmental impacts, in other areas he gives the topic little consideration. Benton attributes this to a contradiction between the materialist foundations of Marx's philosophy of history and aspects of his economic theory, for following assumptions present in classical political economy, his theory of the labour process concentrated on human abilities to transform and dominate nature whilst neglecting what Benton terms eco-regulatory and primary forms of appropriation. This view reflected Marx's optimism concerning the role of capitalism as a stage of human development, yet despite his awareness of its capacity to create conditions by which actors become distanced from

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87 This is not to say that there have not been other significant attempts from within the Marxist tradition to incorporate such concerns. See for example, H. Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, op. cit., and his essay, 'Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society', Capitalism, Nature, Socialism, Vol. 3, No. 3, Sept. 1992, pp. 29-38; R. Williams, Socialism and Ecology, London, Socialist Environment and Resources Association, (no date); A. Gorz, Ecology as Politics, Boston, South End Press, 1980; R. Bahro, Socialism and Survival, London, Heretic, 1982; and J. O'Connor, 'Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Theoretical Introduction', Capitalism, Nature, Socialism, Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1988, pp. 11-38.

the consequences of their actions, he failed to consider the wasteful and polluting by-products of the manufacturing process.[88] Benton wishes to correct such deficiencies within Marx's theory in order to increase its potential for analysing the relationship between society and environment.

A related aspect highlighted by Benton was that Marx, as revealed in his critique of Malthus, did not want to recognise the existence of natural limits on society. This has provided a basis for subsequent Marxist critiques of contemporary environmentalism as neo-Malthusian. Yet as Benton observes, a recognition of limits is not necessarily conservative, though this could easily lead to technocratic or non-democratic responses unless there is a challenge to existing property and market relations through a resocialisation of production in terms of human needs.[89] He argues that it is possible to recognise limits and accept Marx's critique of Malthus without adopting technological determinist or social constructionist positions, of which he is also critical. This is because each society develops a mode of social life within the context of a specific set of conditions and limits, which though ecologically bounded, can be subject to a high degree of variability. So Benton believes it is mistaken to think of nature as a finite system of constraints on human requirements, since any concept of limits must be relativised to particular social and cultural forms. Hence there may be numerous possible directions for future sustainable development, for by reorganising the relationship between society and environment, it is possible to extend existing limits.

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88 T. Benton, 'Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction', New Left Review, No. 178, Nov/Dec., 1989, pp. 51-86.
89 T. Benton, 'The Malthusian Challenge: Ecology, Natural Limits and Human Emancipation', in P. Osborne (ed.), Socialism and the Limits of Liberalism, London, Verso, 1991, pp. 241-269.

Thus having noted that one of the basic tenets of green politics is that the finite dimensions of the Earth places a constraint on any future green society, Benton criticises such conceptions of limits in terms of the biosphere as an implicit acceptance of a technological determinist perspective. Yet greens usually voice concerns over the limits facing a future sustainable society in the context of a critique of the consequences of capitalist industrial society and the global scale of the resulting environmental crisis. Benton demonstrates an awareness of such global problems and accepts that some processes are relatively non-manipulable. He also recognises limits to technological control, detecting idealist overtones within the metaphors of mastery and domination of nature expressed by many Marxist theorists, seeing such attitudes as unrealistic and potentially disastrous.[90] Rather than seeking to transform nature, Benton sees a need for technologies which adapt to conditions. In this he is not as far from the greens as his critique initially suggests, since their conception of an alternative society similarly requires the adoption of appropriate technologies and a redefinition of social relations.

A more significant criticism made by Benton is that those opposing technological determinism often look to nature as a source of values. He sees this response as common to both conservative critics of modernity and those greens seeking a radical alternative future, though in emphasising the similarities in these outlooks he does not specify the marked differences that exist in their respective readings of nature. Noting attempts by greens and deep ecologists to analyse human societies in terms of ecological concepts and even

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90 T. Benton, 'Ecology, Socialism and the Mastery of Nature: A Reply to Reiner Grundmann', New Left Review, No. 194, Jul/Aug., 1992, pp. 55-74.

to interpret these as providing norms applicable to social interactions, Benton argues against such forms of naturalistic reductionism. He insists that scientific ecology cannot provide a basis for social analysis, rejecting attempts to read from it moral imperatives, such as balance, harmony and interdependence, in the context of the articulation of very different constructions of nature by rival cultural and political traditions. But whilst he is critical of moral naturalism he endorses causal or explanatory naturalism, thus recognising natural interdependencies without adopting a reductionist position. He also does not seek to deny that values, including those applied to nature, can have universal validity. Indeed Benton admits to personally subscribing to a sense of nature which, though undoubtedly containing romantic overtones, nevertheless is able to provide a sense of spiritual and aesthetic meaning.

As regards the goals of green politics, Benton characterises these in terms of seeking 'a materially more simple, egalitarian and convivial, decentralised communal existence', which, 'would replace the endless and destructive scramble for worthless commodities with the pleasures of social communication and participation, and an enhanced spiritual and aesthetic connectedness with nature'.[91] Less convincing is his statement that, 'deep-green perspectives often rely on some version of an arcadian "golden age" in which humans lived in harmony with one another and with nature',[92] which then enables him to declare that there is no necessity for 'a return to rustic simplicity, material deprivation, or narrow minded localism - still less the worship of earth goddesses'.[93] Benton does not make it

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91 T. Benton, 'Biology and Social Theory in the Environmental Debate', in M. Redclift and T. Benton, (eds.), Social Theory and the Global Environment, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 39.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., p. 44.

sufficiently clear in this context that most greens are not calling for a return to some imagined past or the institution of nature worship. Whilst the writings of some individuals associated with the green movement could be interpreted in this way, such views cannot be ascribed to the majority of those involved in green politics. The problem is that on this point Benton's account of green politics is again too generalised with no sources being given apart from a reference to the social ecology of Murray Bookchin, who could hardly be taken as representative.[94] Nevertheless Benton does believe that the issues raised by the greens are vitally important even though he regards the economic, social and political dimensions of debate within the movement as undertheorised. His view is that green politics must argue a moral and political case for its vision of the future which does not rely on supposedly objective notions of limits, nor on an ethic based on values drawn from ecology. So though he is critical of some aspects of green politics, Benton recognises the possibilities that exist for a fusion of socialist and green perspectives, as indicated by his own participation in initiatives such as the Red-Green Study Group.[95]

Where Benton demonstrates a willingness to re-evaluate Marxist theory as part of an engagement with green politics, there are those on the left who, whilst recognising the importance of the environment, seem more concerned with appropriating aspects of the green agenda to the socialist cause without significantly reconsidering their existing outlook. A recent example of this can be found in Reiner Grundmann's defence of notions of the domination or mastery of nature, as revealed in his statement that, 'humanity's

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94 For a critique of Bookchin's position see below.
95 See, Red-Green Study Group, What on Earth is to be Done?: A Red-Green Dialogue, Manchester, Red-Green Study Group, 1995.

special position within nature is characterised by its domination of nature'.[96] Dismissing green objections to such a Promethian and instrumental attitude, he denies that their alternative relationship with the environment is possible since, 'Between nature and humankind there can be no harmony'.[97] He similarly criticises Benton for recognising that there may be some limits to technological transformation, something which Grundmann appears not to accept.

Though also displaying some sympathy over environmental concerns, David Harvey agrees with Grundmann that mastery over nature is not necessarily destructive, even if he at least shows an awareness that the use of metaphors of mastery and domination could have possible gendered overtones.[98] Harvey argues that most of the terms of the environmental debate, including conceptions of limits, are merely expressing the values of capitalism. So whilst accepting that capitalism creates scarcity and overpopulation, he believes that by changing social, economic and technological priorities, it will be possible to modify nature to meet human requirements. However, though noting commonalities between Marxist and ecological approaches in that they are both concerned with dialectical relations and processes, Harvey remains sceptical about ecological politics. Despite acknowledging that most accounts portray the green movement as rejecting authoritarian solutions and advocating a participatory society which respects democratic rights and freedoms, he still asserts that there is always an authoritarian aspect to ecological politics. This is not just due to its emphasis on scarcity

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96 R. Grundmann, 'The Ecological Challenge to Marxism', New Left Review, No. 187, May/June 1991, p. 115.
97 Ibid., p. 120.
98 D. Harvey, 'The Nature of the Environment: The Dialectics of Social and Environmental Change', The Socialist Register, 1993, pp. 30-31.

and limits, but also because Harvey believes that environmental politics can get caught up in perpetuating national identities because these are grounded in particular environments. Though aware of Anna Bramwell's conservative preconceptions and her hostility towards greens as 'new authoritarians antagonistic to free-market liberalism', Harvey nevertheless feels able to use her work to show that green politics tends towards reactionary rather than progressive stances.[99] He thus notes the Nazi's use of the slogan 'blood and soil' and repeats Bramwell's suggestion that the greens are somehow tainted by the legacy of National Socialism.

Fascism, Conservatism, and Green Politics

Bramwell's thesis, as stated in *Ecology in the 20th Century*, published in 1989, is that political ecology resulted from a fusion of ideas associated with holistic biology and resource scarcity economics, which occurred primarily in Britain and Germany between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.[100] She further suggests that many of those attracted to such ideas also can be found to have held nationalist and racist beliefs. Concentrating on these developments in a German context Bramwell argues that notions drawn from ecology, romantic identifications with nature, an idealisation of peasant society, and feelings of insecurity concerning national identity, all contributed an environmental dimension to the emergence of National Socialism. She attempts to justify this interpretation by focusing on the presence of these elements in the work of Walther Darré, Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Nazi government between 1933 and 1942, and

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99 Ibid., p. 19.
100 A. Bramwell, Ecology in the 20th Century: A History, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1989.

populariser of the slogan 'blood and soil'.[101] Bramwell portrays Darré as an advocate of organic farming and small scale technology, but since he did little to put such ideas into practice whilst in office, and his land improvement schemes were criticised for damaging ecosystems and causing soil erosion, ultimately she has to admit that his agricultural policies ended in failure. However, in another strand of her argument she maintains that as regards conservation policies on wildlife, habitat protection, and forestry, Nazi Germany constituted the first green state, and contends that rather than demonising the Nazis, the positive aspects of their ecological policies should be considered in order to see them in context as part of a broader movement.

The limitations of Bramwell's approach can be revealed by contrasting her account of the origins of political ecology with Raymond Dominick's recent history of the environmental movement in Germany.[102] Unlike Bramwell, rather than focusing on the history of ideas, Dominick examines responses to environmental problems in the form of movements and institutions, a large number of which appeared in Germany between the 1870s and the 1920s, acquiring popular support, a mass membership, and government approval. He contrasts this with the period after 1933, for when the Nazi government came to power it had no conservation policies and though

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101 A. Bramwell, Blood and Soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party', Bourne End, The Kensal Press, 1985. Darré was also head of the S.S. Race and Settlement Office and had an influential role in framing the S.S. Marriage Laws which many commentators regard as the first legislative step on the road to the Final Solution.
102. R. Dominick, The Environmental Movement in Germany: Prophets and Pioneers 1871-1971, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1992. For a refutation of Bramwell's portrayal of the development of political ecology in Britain see, I. Coates, 'Environmental Concern in Britain 1919-1949: Diversity and Continuity', in S. Elworthy et al. (eds.), Perspectives on the Environment 2, Aldershot, Avebury, 1995, pp. 61-78.

some nature protection groups accommodated themselves with the new regime, others were closed down. Subsequently a conservation act was passed which aimed to create a number of nature reserves but it was never fully implemented, whilst exemptions ensured that there was no conflict with road construction or military developments, or with large scale public works programmes to drain marshland and cultivate moorland.

Bramwell's portrayal of the Nazis as a romantic and anti-modernist movement, motivated by a powerful identification with nature, follows previous accounts which emphasise the importance of the concept of Volksgemeinschaft which envisages the soul of the German people as a manifestation of the national community and landscape.[103] However, it has also been argued that whilst rhetorical use was made of German mythology and history in order to foster a popular ideology of home, soil, and nation, a number of tendencies within Nazism run counter to such trends, such as the creation of a mass society and the application of advanced technology and modern methods of warfare.[104] Thus also to be considered is the environmental destruction caused by the Nazi's industrial programme and policy of military expansion which resulted in World War II. When considered as a whole it is impossible to regard the practices of Nazi Germany as setting an example of environmental good practice, quite aside from the human cost of its genocidal, authoritarian, and militarily destructive actions. On these grounds Bramwell's work can

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103 G. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology, London, Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1966, especially Chapter 1.

104 A number of accounts emphasise that a thoroughly modernist outlook contrasted with a rhetoric of rural romanticism in Nazi Germany. See: E. Bloch, Heritage of Our Times, Cambridge, Polity, 1989; W. Benjamin, 'Theories of German Fascism', New German Critique No. 17, 1979, pp. 120-128; J. Herf, Reactionary Modernism, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984; and Z. Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust, Cambridge, Polity, 1991.

be seen as constituting a form of revisionist history, involving a simultaneous attempt to rehabilitate National Socialism whilst conceiving of political ecology as a ruralist form of racial nationalism.

Bramwell's interpretation of the history of political ecology is open to challenge on almost every count. As a history of ideas her work is highly selective and ignores sources which would undermine her case, being based on the writings of comparatively few individuals, rather than reflecting broader social responses to environmental problems. Another problem lies with her narrow definition of what constitutes political ecology, which for her seems to amount to little more than a combination of rural traditionalism, wildlife conservation, and national self-sufficiency. This can be related to her stated intention of rehabilitating what she sees as the discredited right wing of the ecology movement by way of her argument that political ecology is a distinct political category with its own left and right wings. Bramwell suggests that its source amongst the nationalist and racist right was pure, but that the stream has now become contaminated through its appropriation by the left. For her this explains the contemporary green movement's opposition to capitalism, economic growth, the free market and the nation state, and allows her to attack the green parties for pursuing a socialist agenda which has more to do with changing power structures than with purely environmental issues. However, Bramwell also argues that left wing entryism has not affected the millenarian character of the green movement, which she sees as rejecting Enlightenment values to embrace pagan and New Age beliefs. Her psychologistic interpretation of this is that greens are motivated by guilt, and blaming Western society for the world's ills, they wish to return to primitivism and anarchy in what amounts to a death wish. Expanding upon her

earlier diagnosis, elsewhere she suggests that their whole philosophy indicates an Oedipal desire to murder their father (urban industrial society) and merge with their mother (nature).

More recently Bramwell has sought to explain what she perceives to be the recent decline in green politics.[105] After accusing the green parties of having abandoned 'real' green commitments through their adoption of left-liberal social concerns, she then criticises them for their readiness to take pragmatic political approaches and thus compromise their green principles. Somewhat contrarily, she then commends policy makers for adopting practical environmental measures and argues that since ecological problems are already being tackled at local, national and global levels, this leaves no role for the green movement. One reason why Bramwell wishes to take such a stance is that she cannot see why green politics should necessarily involve a social or international dimension, or require a challenge to existing power structures. This can be ascribed to her apparent opposition to anything associated with the politics of the left, whereas she seems to fully approve of solutions based on private property ownership, free market capitalism and national self interest. She also seems hostile to suggestions that Western nations disproportionately consume the world's resources or that they in any way exploit the Third World. So, though Bramwell does not explicitly state her own political preferences, they can certainly be inferred. Bramwell obviously has little sympathy towards the green movement, but her own partisanship distorts the account she is presenting. Given the weaknesses of her case, it would hardly deserve serious consideration were it not for the fact that her work is constantly

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105 A. Bramwell, The Fading of the Greens: The Decline of Environmental Politics in the West, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994.

cited by commentators who might otherwise be expected to dismiss such opinions as the propaganda of a right-wing ideologue, were they expressed in relation to any other topic.[106]

A similar critique that reveals Bramwell's influence is provided by Andrew McHallam of the Institute of European Defence and Strategic Studies, a New Right think-tank.[107] He expresses concern that, despite their lack of political success, the ideas promoted by the greens have become pervasive throughout society, but that this has taken place without questioning their validity or the philosophy underlying them. What worries McHallam is the anti-capitalist stance taken by the greens. He contends that their opposition to growth and technology will lead to unemployment and falling living standards as part of a desire to return to a simple way of life. As might be expected McHallam argues in response that the free market, economic growth and the application of technology will solve environmental problems. McHallam also sees the greens as implicitly authoritarian since he believes that implementing their policies will require central planning and involve a threat to personal liberties. Curiously the example he uses to illustrate this point is that greens would have to resort to coercion to limit population growth and control migration, yet at the same time he criticises them for opposing immigration controls. This is similar to Bramwell's critique of greens for

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106 Apart from Harvey, others who have uncritically cited Bramwell in order to portray green politics as retaining historical continuities with National Socialism, or as manifesting latently authoritarian, right-wing, or backward looking tendencies, include: R. Gott, 'The Green March', The Guardian, 17 March 1989, p. 31; A. Heywood, Political Ideologies: An Introduction, op. cit., pp. 261-262; A. Vincent, Modern Political Ideologies, op. cit., pp. 213-214; P. Wright, 'Radical, Romantic and Wrong', The Guardian, 15 October 1994, p. 31; A. Ross, The Chicago Gangster Theory of Life: Nature's Debt to Society, London, Verso, 1994, p. 4; and D. Pepper, Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction, London, Routledge, 1996.

107 A. McHallam, The New Authoritarians: Reflections on the Greens, London, Institute of European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1991.

supposedly advocating draconian prescriptions unrelated to environmental issues, whereas elsewhere she agrees with those calling for similar draconian measures for population control. Hence not only do both authors contradict themselves, but they also indicate their own authoritarian tendencies.

Not all conservative analyses are so hostile to green politics. John Gray, who has come to reject the kind of free market neo-liberalism represented by McHallam, sees possibilities of an alliance between traditional conservatism and green perspectives.[108] He wishes to challenge the assumption that green politics is necessarily a manifestation of the radical Left by arguing that traditional conservatism's scepticism about progress, its prioritisation of the common life of the community, its repudiation of liberal individualism, and its recognition of the intergenerational continuity between the living, the dead and the unborn, all show an affinity with green thought. Gray does concede that before an alliance can become a possibility, Conservatism must overcome the neo-Liberal doctrines of the New Right which have become dominant within it, as these have proved to be destructive to families, communities and the environment. Gray still believes that market institutions, property rights and price mechanisms can have environmental benefits, though he also acknowledges that the market has ecological limitations in that it cannot protect publicly held goods and resources. He therefore concedes that some constraint and supplementation of the market by government is required to defend common life and shared environments. Gray is also concerned that the globalisation of market forces through institutions such as GATT, and the operations of

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108 J. Gray, Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment, London, Routledge, 1993, especially Chapter 4.

transnational corporations will endanger local ways of life. Believing that current models of economic development are neither desirable nor possible, he regards the affluence of the developed countries as providing a pernicious example to the rest of the world and so argues that the First World must reform itself before it is in a position to advise others what to do. Since Gray accepts that economic growth is bound to confront environmental limits, he argues that rather than seeking legitimacy by encouraging endless material aspiration, society should foster deeper allegiances through a restoration of common life.

Though Gray has sought to address aspects of the green agenda, it is interesting to note those areas where his position remains remarkably similar to that of Bramwell and McHallam. Apart from a common commitment to market mechanisms and property rights, they would also concur with his emphasis on the role for the state, not only for defence, but also to control immigration. Gray expects a likely increase in the numbers of ecological refugees from the Third World and believes that unless this is checked this could destabilise communities and provoke latent racism. No doubt Bramwell would also agree with his identification of population growth as one of the greatest threats to global ecological stability, and his invocation of Malthus to predict that this will lead to wars as well as migration. Gray shows little familiarity with recent research on population, for he discounts social and economic factors which have been demonstrated to be key variables, in favour of culture and religion which he perceives to be more significant. Gray's portrayal of the greens also echoes that of Bramwell and McHallam. He too criticises their anti-capitalist bias, and also regards them as opposed to urban life and technology. This enables him to reject what he perceives as

the rural nostalgia implicit to green politics and its apparent desire to return to pre-industrial society. Also like Bramwell and Mchallam, Gray singles out the opposition of the greens to nuclear power as entirely unreasonable and misinformed. Though he appears not to have heard of the precautionary principle, he does grant that large scale technologies can be potentially dangerous, and elsewhere recognises that weapons of mass destruction pose a significant threat to people and the environment, even if he does not connect the different strands of this argument together as a green perspective would.

Nevertheless, there are also observable differences in that whereas Bramwell and McHallam simply want to denigrate the greens, Gray obviously believes that their message is sufficiently important to incorporate aspects of it within a conservative worldview. The result can be contradictory: rejecting economic growth, but favouring the market; and seeking to protect local ways of life, but proposing no mechanism to constrain the global institutions that threaten them. Though Gray's recognition of the importance of the environment seems to be quite genuine, because it is interpreted within a conservative framework, his proposals for solutions are often at variance with a broader green agenda. He does not appear to have read widely concerning positions that greens actually do take, hence his tendency to perpetuate the usual stereotypes. Thus Gray's understanding of what a green perspective involves remains limited, failing to engage with the package as a whole.

Anarchism and Green Politics

Out of all existing political philosophies it is anarchism that a large proportion of commentators recognise as bearing the greatest

similarity to green politics. This is because both perspectives share a commitment to participatory democracy and decentralisation in order to create a society consisting of a network of self-reliant and self-governing communities, advocating a minimal role for a centralised state, if not its complete abolition. They are also both anti-hierarchical and libertarian in outlook, emphasising the importance of personal freedom and self-expression. There are further similarities as regards tactics with both favouring the use of civil disobedience, non-violent direct action, passive resistance, boycotts, occupations and demonstrations. Like those involved in green politics, anarchists also tend to seek to put their beliefs into practice in their everyday lives, and recognise that the ends they are trying to achieve are integrally related to the means adopted to attain them.[109]

Most discussion of the link between anarchism and green politics invariably refer to the writings of Murray Bookchin, who since the early 1960s has taken a pioneering role in bringing together these two perspectives under the banner of social ecology. Bookchin's social ecology understands ecological problems as resulting from social problems. In this respect he has sought to distinguish social ecology from environmentalism, which he characterizes as having an instrumental and mechanistic approach, viewing nature as a passive object conceived of in terms of its utility to humans. Thus for Bookchin environmentalism does not challenge the basis of modern society, instead adopting the tactics of compromise and trade-off, in a single issue and reformist approach which endorses market mechanisms and legitimates existing power structures. Though he

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109 See: A. Carter, 'Towards a Green Political Theory', in A. Dobson and P. Lucardie (eds.), The Politics of Nature: Explorations in Green Political Theory, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 39-62; and P. Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism, London, Fontana, 1993, especially Chapters 39 and 40.

admits that environmentalism can provide opposition to destruction in particular cases, nevertheless Bookchin believes that rather than questioning the domination of nature, it merely seeks a technical means to minimise the hazards caused by domination.[110]

By contrast social ecology regards the ecological crisis as resulting from hierarchical social relations with the domination of humans by humans preceding the domination of nature. In part Bookchin bases this on an interpretation of the history of pre-literate and pre-capitalist societies which assumes an absence of formal hierarchy prior to the emergence of religion, cities and nation-states. However, the history he presents is idealised and generalised, being drawn from a few rather dated and highly conjectural anthropological sources.[111] This is not to say that Bookchin is a primitivist who wishes to return to some imagined golden age since he praises developments such as Athenian democracy (despite its limitations) and largely conceives of social ecology in a modern urban context. Indeed Bookchin's notion of libertarian municipalism holds a positive view of cities as potential democratic forums, though he does argue that larger cities need to be reduced in size and decentralised, whilst retaining a confederal relationship between municipalities. He believes this would encourage direct democracy and the local control of neighbourhoods through municipal common ownership, as well as facilitating the development of alternative technologies, renewable energy sources, and diversified organic agriculture. The rescaling of cities would also be necessary in order to prevent the expansion of

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110 M. Bookchin, The Ecology of Freedom, Palo Alto, Cheshire Books, 1982, Chapter 1. For a more readable summary of his ideas see, M. Bookchin, Remaking Society, Montreal and New York, Black Rose Books, 1989.
111 Ibid., pp. 41-73.

urban areas, to create a balance between town and country, and allow communities to fit the carrying capacity of their ecological region.[112]

For Bookchin social ecology is also based on a philosophy of nature he terms dialectical naturalism. This sees nature as a self organising and ordered web of life in which domination and hierarchy are absent. Thus ecology as the science of nature reveals concepts such as balance, interdependence, and diversity, which are able to provide a source of objective values. Bookchin denies that this is deterministic, for though he is against forms of dualism which would separate humans from nature, he also rejects reductionist approaches which would seek to understand society in terms of nature. In an attempt to extricate himself from this trap he seeks to distinguish 'first nature', the non-human world, from 'second nature', the social world which humans have created. So though he accepts that humans are unique as a species because they are rational, he sees this as the result of an evolutionary tendency, as revealed in his statement:

> [H]umanity has been constituted to intervene actively, consciously, and purposively into "first nature" with unparalleled effectiveness and alter it on a planetary scale. To denigrate these capacities is to deny the thrust of natural evolution itself towards organic complexity and subjectivity - the potentiality of "first nature" to actualize itself in self-conscious intellectuality ..... [H]umanity's natural capacity to consciously intervene into and act upon "first nature" has given rise to a "second nature" that has all but absorbed "first nature".[113]

Thus Bookchin regards humanity as the self-conscious agent of nature with the power to change the world. He also believes that

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112 Ibid., pp. 179-189.
113 M. Bookchin, The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism, Montreal and New York, Black Rose Books, 1990, pp. 42-43.

active rational intervention in nature can further enrich it. However, he denies that he is advocating natural engineering for though humans occupy a unique place in evolution, he insists they have no right to dominate nature.

In adopting this stance Bookchin leaves himself open to criticism on a number of counts, not least concerning the teleological overtones of his position. Peter Marshall, for one, accuses him of humanistic arrogance in this respect, as well as suggesting that Bookchin is somewhat vague when it comes to specifying exactly who is to decide what the direction of evolution should be.[114] This is particularly ironic given that Bookchin has criticised deep ecology on similar grounds.[115] Marshall also finds him curiously silent concerning the position of other species within this scheme, noting Bookchin's enthusiasm for the increased mechanisation of agriculture, including the keeping of livestock in pens to be fed automatically. Though Bookchin does acknowledge the right of other species to exist, such as in the need to preserve rainforests, it is curious, given his critique of reformist environmentalism, that he often does so in the context of arguments based on their utility to humans.[116] Thus his conception of the relationship between society and nature remains at an abstract level. As Marshall further notes, though Bookchin is rhetorically critical of instrumental rationality, his programme for the socialisation of nature and expectations of abundance for all, would seem to imply a continued exploitation of nature which remains effectively instrumental in approach, even

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114 For his critique of Bookchin see, P. Marshall, Demanding the Impossible, op. cit., pp. 617-621.
115 See, M. Bookchin, 'Social Ecology Versus "Deep Ecology": A Challenge for the Ecology Movement', The Raven, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1987, p. 231.
116 See for example, M. Bookchin, Remaking Society, op. cit., p. 14.

though the social and technological basis for this, would be redefined.

Bookchin's position on green parties has also been contradictory. Initially he spoke admiringly of the dynamism of green conferences in Germany and the USA, suggesting that whereas the orthodox left is dying, the anarchist tradition can be seen as continuing within the New Social Movements such as the greens.[117] Indeed he even declared, 'In Germany, where a Green Party has supplanted the traditional socialisms with a social ecology movement, radicalism still appeals to a broad "constituency" that ranges from ordinary protesters to outright revolutionaries', thus identifying the German Green Party as representing the social ecology movement.[118] Even so he did note that the German Greens were divided between radical and realist tendencies, with the latter trying to turn the movement into a reformist parliamentary party. Recently Bookchin has become more critical of the 'realo' faction and their parliamentary approach stating that:

> The coalition of the German Greens with the Social Democratic government in the state of Hesse, for example, ended in ignominy in the mid-1980s. Not only did the "realist wing" of the German Green Party taint the movement's finest principles with compromises, it also made the Party more bureaucratic, manipulative, and "professional". The result? A once grassroots radical green movement was changed fundamentally and the state it sought to influence did not. The German Greens seem very far today from their early promise of representing a genuinely new ecological politics.[119]

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117 M. Bookchin, 'New Social Movements: The Anarchic Dimension', in D. Goodway (ed.), For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice, London, Routledge, 1989, pp. 259-274.
118 M. Bookchin, 'On the Last Intellectuals', Telos No. 73, Fall 1987, p. 182. See also, M. Bookchin, 'Social Ecology Versus "Deep Ecology", op. cit., p. 246.
119 M. Bookchin in, S. Chase (ed.), Defending the Earth: A Dialogue Between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman, Boston, South End Press, 1991, p. 78.

So with hindsight he contends that the election of Green representatives to national parliaments has achieved very little as regards creating a more ecological society. Bookchin seems to equate such an approach with environmental reformism since, 'Ecology movements that enter into parliamentary activities not only legitimate state power at the expense of popular power, but they are obliged to function within the state'.[120] He is critical of Rudi Dutschke's strategy of a long march through the institutions since he believes this has resulted in people becoming trapped within the bureaucracy and incorporated by the system. Bookchin certainly includes the German Green Party, of which Dutschke was a founder member, within this assessment.[121]

Bookchin remains dismissive of attempts to seek influence through the mainstream politics of parliamentary democracy as he believes this leads to managerialism and passivity. This does not mean that he does not support attempts by groups to organise around minimum programmes or participate in local elections. Even though to some extent such an approach legitimises state structures, for Bookchin this is justified if it is part of a wider strategy of creating new local structures to increase direct democratic control of municipal governments. This would be followed by a municipalisation of the economy to support local self-managed production. Municipal governments would affiliate to regional confederations electing deputies subject to recall. Bookchin insists that policy must be directly decided upon by the people with the function of elected officials being restricted to the administration of that policy. This leads him to argue that, 'We need a social movement that can

120 M. Bookchin, Remaking Society, op. cit., p. 161.
121 M. Bookchin, 'Intelligentsia and the New Intellectuals', Alternative Forum, Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1991, p. 5.

effectively resist and ultimately replace the nation-state and corporate capitalism; not one that limits its sights to "improving" the current system'.[122] However, it is not apparent that his approach, pursued in isolation, constitutes a feasible strategy. Bookchin does not specify the agents who are to bring about this transformation, whilst his purist attitude seems to restrict the means used to place these issues on the public agenda. From their inception green parties have adopted the multiple strategies of contesting national and local elections, and supporting a variety of extra-parliamentary actions, in order to work towards the creation of a sustainable society. Whilst it remains to be seen whether the green parties will manage to take society in the direction they desire, it seems somewhat disingenuous of Bookchin to reject their involvement in parliamentary politics since this was one of the things they were set up to do in the first place.

As Bookchin's work reveals, though there are undoubtedly a number of similarities between green politics and anarchism, it is clear that there are also significant differences. Whereas anarchists tend to reject all forms of government undertaken by a centralised state, greens, whilst emphasising the need for participatory democracy and decentralisation, and expressing strong reservations concerning the role of the state, nevertheless recognise that the reality of state power cannot be ignored and even accept that it may serve a useful function in some areas. So whilst those writing from within an anarchist perspective reject liberal democracy based on majority rule by representation, and criticise attempts to engage in parliamentary politics, green parties do not see it as problematic to

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122 M. Bookchin in, S. Chase (ed.), Defending the Earth, op. cit., p. 81.

contest elections for state parliaments and to seek to enact policies at a state level. Thus it could be said that whilst green politics is undoubtedly influenced by anarchist thought, it might be better described as libertarian in outlook, in that whilst wishing to limit the powers of central government to a minimum, it would seem to accept that some actions will inevitably be undertaken at state level. Also whilst greens could be seen as libertarian as regards the high premium they place on personal freedom and self expression, at the same time they seek to balance this with notions of social responsibility which could potentially restrict autonomy in some areas. The relationship between these two tendencies will be further considered in the discussion of liberalism below, and in the context of the views expressed by Green Party activists in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Feminism and Green Politics

Another affinity noted by many commentators is that between ecology and feminism. Such discussions tend to focus on philosophical or development issues surrounding ecofeminist critiques linking male domination and ecological destruction.[123] Comparatively few studies specifically apply a feminist critique to the outlook and practice of green politics, an exception being the work of Mary Mellor. Also, unusually for any theoretical account of green politics, her discussion is actually grounded on a reading of documents produced by the green parties, including the writings of prominent members. Writing from a socialist feminist perspective, Mellor argues that the green

123 See for example: C. Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution, London, Wildwood House, 1982; J. Plant (ed.), Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, London, Green Print, 1989; V. Shiva, Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development, London, Zed Books, 1989; M. Mies and V. Shiva, Ecofeminism, London, Zed Books, 1993; and V. Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, London, Routledge, 1993.

movement has not adequately incorporated feminism within its philosophy or practice, despite findings that women have been shown to express greater levels of concern over environmental issues than men, and given that a substantial proportion of the membership of green organisations and parties are women.[124] Regarding *Die Grünen*, Mellor notes that much of the impetus behind its formation came from the feminist and peace movements. In addition to its four main principles of ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy and non-violence, its 1983 programme displayed a high level of commitment to addressing issues surrounding domestic labour, childcare, sexual discrimination, violence against women, and the right of women to control their fertility.[125] Organisationally *Die Grünen* sought a minimum of fifty per cent representation of women at all levels of the Party, illustrated by the fact that in 1987, of their forty four representatives in the Bundestag, twenty five were women. However, Mellor cites Petra Kelly's observation that the fifty per cent representation rule allowed male members to avoid examining underlying reasons why many women found it difficult to sustain active involvement, such as their primary responsibility for childcare. Kelly also stated that it was difficult to get men to accept the centrality of women's issues, which they justified by stating that other priorities were more urgent.

In a similar discussion Joni Seager observed that despite attempts to institute a new form of politics, women in *Die Grünen* found themselves having to operate in the same way as men, such as by arguing aggressively or avoiding displays of emotion, simply to be

124 M. Mellor, 'Green Politics: Ecofeminist, Ecofeminine or Ecomasculine?, Environmental Politics, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1992, pp. 229-251.
125 *Die Grünen*, Programme of the German Green Party, London, Heretic Books, 1983, section V.2.

heard.[126] The continuance of patriarchal structures also manifested itself in rigid time schedules. Seager notes that many of the men were also unhappy working within conventional political structures, but felt constrained by the need to make the most effective use of the limited resources available to the Party. According to Mellor the failure to translate a feminist agenda into practice is even more apparent in the Green Party. Whilst women make up an estimated forty seven per cent of the membership and are as active as men locally, she suggests they are less active nationally since only a quarter of its Prospective Parliamentary Candidates were women. However, Seager notes that thirty per cent of Green candidates in the 1987 general election were women, which was a higher proportion than was managed by any other party. If Mellor had also taken into account those elected to positions within the Party at a national level, she would have noted that a significant proportion of its officers are women, as will be shown in Chapter 3. As regards Green Party policies, Mellor detects a failure to specifically address women's issues except for a vague statement on the need to free people from sexually stereotyped roles. Her main complaint is that the gendered division of labour, especially with regard to unpaid domestic and emotional labour, is not acknowledged. In this respect she draws attention to a number of male commentators on green politics who, whilst giving lip service to critiques of patriarchy and endorsing feminine values, tend to ignore the material dimension of gender inequalities.

Certainly the Green Party was never as overtly feminist as *Die Grünen*, yet the presence of a high proportion of women members did

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126 J. Seager, Earth Follies: Feminism, Politics and the Environment, London, Earthscan, 1993, especially pp. 169-175.

ensure that such issues did receive attention. Seager cites the statement of Green Party activist Jean Lambert to the effect that the Party has a feminist dimension since it has no patriarchal leader figure, and that women's needs have been recognised to the extent that most events have a creche to allow greater involvement from women, whilst the non-judgemental attitude at meetings encourages people unused to public speaking, to participate more freely.[127] Regarding policy, it is certainly the case that the 1987 *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society* to which Mellor refers is not explicit on gender issues, though later versions do acknowledge the unrecognised role of women in the informal economy, and call for improved educational and economic opportunities for women, the provision of adequate childcare facilities, and the prevention of harassment and discrimination.[128] It could also be said that the Party has sought to integrate gender concerns within broader policy without specifically referring to them as such. An obvious example of this is the Basic Income Scheme, which in guaranteeing a minimum income to all citizens, would ensure that activities such as domestic labour and childcare would be recognised financially. Mellor does accept the advantages of such a system, though she expresses concern that unless this also involved a challenge to the private ownership and control of production, exchange and resources, any potential benefits would be vulnerable to external economic forces.[129] Against such reservations it could be argued that Basic Income is seen by the Green Party as operating in conjunction with other policies involving community control of finance and industry, and through mechanisms

127 Ibid., p. 174.
128 Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, London, the Green Party, 1995, sections EC400, P504, SW520, WR344-346, and WR320-322.
129 M. Mellor, Breaking the Boundaries: Towards a Feminist Green Socialism, London, Virago, 1992, pp. 206-208.

such as land value and resource taxes, which would go some way to addressing these concerns. Nevertheless, Mellor's main point remains a valid one in that the greens must address institutionalised and informal power structures, and the social relations of class, gender and ethnicity that they embody, otherwise their attempt to create an alternative society will merely reproduce existing inequalities. So though recognising green commitments to equity and social justice she detects possible tensions within their outlook between a liberal emphasis on rights and responsibilities, and the requirement for collective action to achieve an egalitarian society more often associated with socialist conceptions of justice.

Liberalism, the Enlightenment, and Green Politics

This observation raises an interesting point, for whereas green politics has been examined in relation to most other political philosophies, its connection to liberalism has received comparatively little attention. It is only in the context of philosophical debates concerning ecological ethics that possible correspondences between liberalism and environmental issues have been explored. One discussion that allows further consideration of the topic of rights and responsibilities has been provided by Tim Hayward, though he suggests an alternative interpretation to that of Mellor as to how these concepts might be understood in relation to ecological concerns.[130] He begins by highlighting problems associated with the liberal discourse of rights which, whilst upholding universal principles of freedom and access to opportunity, reproduce existing social divisions, and perpetuate competitive, egoistic and atomistic

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130 T. Hayward, Ecological Thought: An Introduction, Cambridge, Polity, 1994.

forms of individualism. Also, apart from the difficulties arising over prioritising competing claims, Hayward notes that the economic freedoms legitimised by individual rights invariably results in an avoidance of the wider consequences of their actions by the wealthy and powerful. He further adds that from an ecological perspective rights are unable to incorporate holistic or long-term perspectives, nor can they adequately include future generations or the non-human world.

Thus, rather than prioritising rights, following the work of Hans Jonas, Hayward points to the concept of an imperative of responsibility as providing the core of an ecological ethic.[131] Whilst Hayward concedes that there would be problems determining liability within complex interactions involving a variety of agents, he believes that responsibility could be attributed on the basis of the levels of participation and power of those involved, and in terms of the alternative options available to them. As a consequence of such an approach rights would become conditional on responsibility, which rather than being individual, would operate within a social context as part of a network of relationships. Hayward believes that this would result in the extension of freedoms in favour of those who have their liberties infringed as a consequence of the economic action of others. Therefore he argues that the adoption of an ethic of responsibility would result in a reconceptualisation of rights which would counter the individualism of liberal discourse. Hayward's summary of this debate certainly has relevance to an understanding of conceptions of rights and responsibility within green ideology, as will be seen when these issues are considered by way of the accounts of Green Party

131 See, H. Jonas, The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1984.

activists in Chapters 4 and 5. However, Hayward does not really connect his discussion of this topic to his subsequent examination of the meaning of green politics in relation to Enlightenment thought.

The central question which Hayward is seeking to address is whether there is a distinct green political philosophy, and if, given green critiques of economic growth and scientific rationality, this might involve a break with the progressive politics based on the values of the Enlightenment as some accounts have implied. He observes the green parties have demonstrated a strong commitment to upholding democratic rights and notions of justice, though because they wish to extend these to future generations and the non-human world, this brings them into conflict with economic liberalism and those forms of socialist planning which have proved environmentally destructive. In many ways Hayward regards the greens as building upon liberal and socialist traditions, which both contain ecological dimensions, though often in a subordinate form, such as in John Stuart Mill's notion of a steady state economy or that current of socialist thought represented by the work of William Morris. Hence Hayward is able to note that green visions of a non-hierarchical, decentralised society existing in a harmonious relationship with the natural world, have strong similarities with those portrayed within liberal, socialist and anarchist traditions. Though his main emphasis focuses on such continuities, Hayward also perceives an effort to break with existing ideologies, even if, in seeking to go beyond left and right, the greens cannot be described as neutral on issues such as social justice and the equitable distribution of resources.

Concerning the attempt to construct a new kind of political party as part of a dual strategy linking parliamentary with extra-parliamentary action, he tends to follow the kind of critiques offered

by Offe and Habermas on the limitations and likely conflicts consequent on organising as a political party. Hayward sees considerably more potential in such a party's ability to support the creation of various alternative practices, ranging from non-violent direct action to lifestyle activities. He argues that such practices involve new forms of production and exchange, create new autonomous public spaces, provide new avenues of resistance, and politicise everyday life. So whilst lifestyle approaches may not directly challenge dominant power structures, Hayward disagrees with those who would dismiss such activities as non-political forms of consumerism, since, in moving from the individual to the collective, they open up the possibility of redefining the political. In this connection Hayward points to parallels with Ernst Bloch's notion of anticipatory practices as precursors of a concrete utopia, Seyla Benhabib's stress on the importance of the creation of new public spaces to facilitate emancipatory struggle, and John Dryzek's argument for the extension of discursive democracy to include the natural world.[132] On this basis Hayward argues that it is possible to reconcile the pursuit of universal values with the transformation of the relationship between society and the environment. He thus sees green critiques as providing the potential for an extension and renewal of the Enlightenment project in what might be described as an ecological enlightenment.

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132 T. Hayward, Ecological Thought, op. cit., pp. 206-212. See also, S. Benhabib, 'Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory', Telos, No. 49, Fall 1981, pp. 39-59; and J. Dryzek, 'Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere', op. cit. For an evaluation of Bloch's ideas see, R. Levitas, The Concept of Utopia, London, Philip Allan, 1990, Chapter 4.

Conclusion

Despite the diversity of approaches between the perspectives considered above, which reflects the different preoccupations of those providing the analyses, it is a deficiency common to practically all these theoretical accounts that they are insufficiently grounded in the actual beliefs and practices of those involved in green politics. This is not to suggest that these approaches do not often display considerable insight, but as it will be shown in the remaining chapters, even the strongest accounts do not fully reflect the worldview of those active in green politics. As regards the accounts seeking to describe and categorise green politics, each tends to construct an idealised package of ideas displaying a degree of logical coherence which can then be labelled as in some way representing a green ideology. Whilst this process can often reveal the range of ideas involved and how these relate to each other, these accounts seem rarely to connect such beliefs to actual groups, or to consider how they are understood or applied in practice. So though they are able to describe some aspects of green politics they are unable to provide convincing analyses or explanations of these beliefs. Dobson comes closest to presenting a comprehensive description of the range of concerns, but like O'Riordan and Eckersley, his main purpose is to construct a general framework by which the various forms of environmental concern can be differentiated. However, the danger is that such exercises can be reduced to an idealised construct which says more about what the author believes green politics should be like, rather than what it is in actuality, as in the case of Goodin's attempt to separate green values from practice.

As regards those approaches adopting a more sociological perspective, by relating the ideas held by particular groups to their social location, historical experience, and structural conditions, a number of commentators have highlighted the predominance within the green movement of the members of the New Middle Class in alliance with others drawn from groups distanced from the productive sector. What is less clear is why some members of such groups translated their concerns into a new form of politics or why the environment provided a focus for this. Whilst none of the accounts discussed here, are able to offer a complete explanation, they at least are able to point to various factors which contribute to a greater understanding of green politics. Thus Inglehart's emphasis on the preconditions influencing the values of the post-war generation, and the attempt by Cotgrove and Duff to relate these to occupational position both make valuable contributions. Similarly Gouldner's analysis of the role of education and some of the interests concealed behind the rhetoric of the New Middle Class also adds to our understanding, as does Offe's insights concerning the alliance of groups involved. It is Habermas though who goes furthest in combining all these elements into something approaching a theory of the structural generation of the outlooks associated with green politics.

Particular emphasis has been given to the perspective provided by Habermas because despite his ambivalence towards green politics and the contradictions involved in some of the analytical stances he adopts, it remains the most comprehensive and suggestive of all the explanations under consideration. Though the questionable theoretical foundation on which Habermas bases his conceptualisation of nature means that aspects of his position must be viewed with some

reservation, nevertheless his broader analysis can be seen as offering considerable potential as a framework to apply to the actual beliefs and practices of those involved in green politics. Thus out of all the theoretical approaches it is that of Habermas which comes closest to providing a plausible explanation of green politics in terms of the structural factors creating the conditions for its emergence, the groups responding to these factors, the kinds of concerns they articulate, and how they seek to mobilise these concerns. Even though his support is not wholehearted, Habermas obviously has some sympathy with the greens who in many ways conform to the characteristics of the new politics he expounds. As will be seen in Chapter 5, his observations on the structural generation of the concerns represented by green politics provide a useful basis for analysing the worldview of those involved. The contributions offered by both Beck and Giddens are less convincing. Though initially indicating that the green movement is symptomatic of a new form of political practice arising in response to reflexive modernity, their approach is too general and considerably misrepresents the views of those active in green politics, especially with regard to the suggestion that the greens seek a return to nature and can thus be dismissed as a form of anti-modernism.

This leads to arguments concerning the political location of green ideology, which are often closely bound up with attempts at political appropriation, with claims being lodged on all sides. Thus Lowe and Worboys, Harvey, and to a lesser extent Enzensberger, all suggest that the greens are essentially conservative. At the same time Bramwell, McHallam, and in a more qualified way Gray, somewhat curiously categorise the greens as both socialist and primitivist. Meanwhile accounts such as those of Bookchin and Mellor

respectively, highlight the anarchist and feminist influences upon green politics. Others including Scott and Benton recognise the complexity of green politics in that it combines aspects of left and right, whilst Hayward sees them as synthesising left, liberal and anarchist elements.

What is striking in considering all of these theoretical portrayals is the extent to which they tend to conceive of green politics in terms of opposing dualistic categories: left versus right; forward looking versus backward looking; modern versus anti-modern; technocentric versus ecocentric; anthropocentric versus ecocentric; and ecologism versus environmentalism. Whilst some accounts do observe that green politics often consists of a combination of such opposing tendencies, which perhaps explains some of the contradictions manifested in its ideology and practice, there are few suggestions that it could possibly go beyond these categories. It is inevitable that a new form of politics will be conditioned by a reaction to, and an ongoing relationship with, existing political outlooks, as well as being affected by the social and structural climate in which it operates. Yet from the perspective of those involved, it may be a synthesis of existing perspectives, but one which also seeks to go beyond them to create something new and distinct, something that few commentators apart from Dobson seem to seriously consider.

Despite the variations of emphasis a number of common themes can be identified in these analyses which deserve further investigation. These include a consideration of the relationship between ecological perspectives and economics as providing the basis of a distinct green worldview. This also raises the question as to whether green politics can be clearly differentiated from

environmentalism. A second theme concerns the extent to which greens demonstrate a commitment to universal values, and how these are understood and applied in practice. Those most obviously deserving attention in the light of the discussions above are those of equity, social justice, personal freedom, rights and responsibilities. A third theme which emerged was that of the green politics as a political alternative, and how a concern with democratic participation can be related to their ambivalent attitudes towards the state. Another point noted by several commentators relates to the ethical dimension of green ideology, and how much this involves an opposition to instrumental rationality and a reconceptualisation of the relationship of means and ends. A fifth, not unrelated, area deserving attention concerns the role of lifestyle and how the search for alternative needs and satisfactions can be incorporated within a collective political practice. These aspects will all be examined in Chapters 4 and 5 in relation to the beliefs and practices of Green Party activists.

A second set of common themes also emerged in relation to the political location of green ideology. These include the varying interpretations of the political affinities between green ideology and other perspectives which raises the question of what continuities and discontinuities exist between green politics and other political philosophies. Another theme which deserves attention concerns the continuing perpetration of a number of negative stereotypes of green politics and whether charges can be sustained that the greens are latently authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban, and desire to return to a rural idyll or state of nature. This also connects to the problem of how green politics can be placed in relation to the left-right political spectrum, or whether it can be regarded as

constituting a new and distinct ideological perspective. These issues will provide the basis for the investigation of the accounts of Green Party activists in Chapter 6. Thus it is hoped that by applying the theoretical perspectives discussed above, to the actual beliefs and practices of those involved in green politics, this will throw further light on the nature of green ideology as well on the adequacy of the theories themselves.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Having decided that the main problem with the theoretical perspectives resulted from an insufficient grounding in the beliefs and practices of those involved in green politics, I decided the best way to respond to this situation was to study some of those representative of this outlook in order to determine how they understood green ideology. Ideally it would have been useful to have embarked upon a comparative study of the worldview of several groups representing different forms of green politics in order to contrast these with the theoretical portrayals, but because of the time and resources available it was only possible to investigate one group in sufficient depth. I decided to focus on the Green Party since it was one of the first groups to articulate a recognisable green politics, and because as an established political party it seemed likely that it would represent a distinct ideological stance. This choice had added advantages, for, as noted in the Introduction, I already had some knowledge and experience of the Green Party, and I expected that gaining access and co-operation would not present any problems, which proved to be the case. Indeed the Green Party as an organisation, and the individual members I encountered, provided all the assistance necessary to make the research possible. There follows an account of the methodology which formed the basis of this investigation, including a consideration of the documentary sources,

the context of the research, the process of participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and the analysis of the findings.

Documentary Sources

The first stage of this phase of the research began with a study of the documentary sources available. Though Dobson states that the ideological content of the outlook of the green parties is apparent in their manifestos, I did not find this to be the case.[1] The manifestos, newsletters, and other documents published by the Green Party primarily deal with policy, strategy, and organisation; so as far as the public face of the Party is concerned, underlying philosophy or beliefs receive surprisingly little discussion.[2] There has been some research on the Green Party, mostly undertaken by political scientists, but this has tended to concentrate on party development, organisational strategy, or involved questionnaire surveys of the membership. Again these have given little consideration to the ideological outlook of those involved. I also examined media reports and the writings of prominent Party members. The latter were more suggestive concerning the beliefs underlying green politics, but it was difficult to evaluate how representative such sources were. The findings from this documentary investigation are presented in Chapter 3. However, it soon became apparent that in order to uncover the worldview of those involved it would be necessary to supplement these documentary sources with other approaches. Consequently I decided to undertake a small number of in-depth

1 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought, op. cit., p. 4
2 For a list of Green Party documents consulted see the relevant section in the Bibliography.

interviews with active members and to supplement the information gained from these with participant observation of Green Party meetings, conferences and other events.

The Context of the Research

This decision was taken in early 1994 with the active phase of the research occurring between then and late 1996. To set the research in context it was undertaken in the period following fifteen years of Conservative government, and the fourth year under John Major's premiership. Tony Blair had just assumed the leadership of the Labour Party and was already embarking on the process of 'modernisation' from 'old' to 'New Labour'. This was also a time of continuing cuts in public services and relative economic decline, during which period environmental concerns were not regarded as a priority by the main political parties, despite media attention focusing on a series of protests against the government's road building programme.

As far as the Green Party was concerned, as will be seen in Chapter 3, following the Party's fifteen per cent share of the vote in the 1989 European elections there had been a surge in both media attention and membership. A group within the leadership took this as an opportunity to rationalise the Party's structure, a move resisted by a large proportion of the active membership. Though these organisational reforms were carried through, this period was marked by prolonged factional conflict within the national Party. This had a considerable influence on most research undertaken during this time, which consequently tended to characterise the

Green Party as ideologically riven by disputes. By the time I began my research such conflicts had been forgotten, whilst media attention and membership had declined to pre-1989 levels. Thus I gained a very different picture from the research carried out a few years before.

Participant Observation

My participant observation of the Green Party took place between May 1994 and October 1996, which included attending all five national Party conferences held during this period, as well as other meetings and events at both local and regional level. This also involved keeping a continuous record of all observations and impressions. To facilitate this process I became a Green Party member. This had the advantage that it entitled me to be present at any Green Party meeting, the benefit of which became apparent at the first conference I attended where non-members were excluded from a number of meetings deemed confidential or contentious. However, I never hid the fact that I was a sociologist undertaking research on the Green Party, and whether being introduced by others, or introducing myself, this was always made clear during any extended conversations with Party members. Though becoming a member did sometimes place me in an ambiguous position, I did my best to avoid being drawn into participating too actively. For example I declined putting myself forward as a Green Party candidate in local council elections though asked to do so, but did accept the post of contact for my local Party which did not require an active role.

The participant observation component of the research proved invaluable towards understanding the Green Party as a collective entity, as well as revealing the diversity of concerns of its members and the stances they adopted, including areas of agreement and disagreement. This approach provided a useful contrast to the in-depth interviews conducted by setting individual discussions of conceptions of green politics in the context of how such beliefs were translated into a collective practice.

The In-depth Interviews

Given the absence of detailed discussion of the ideology underlying the worldview of those involved in green politics in the theoretical literature and that published by the Green Party, the most straightforward way of remedying this seemed to be to go and ask members what beliefs they actually held. In-depth interviews were seen as providing the best means of allowing the beliefs of those invited to participate in the research to be expressed and explored. With this in mind I decided to approach a small number of active or long-standing Green Party members, since having made such a commitment to green politics, by implication they were likely to provide the most articulate expression of the beliefs informing their political practice. The sample of thirty two interviewees were selected from lists of Green Party officers and contacts provided by Party newsletters and other publications, targeting those active locally and nationally in four geographical locations; two predominantly urban and two a mixture of small towns, suburban, and rural areas. The selection criteria also aimed to reflect the known

social composition of the Green Party revealed by previous quantitative surveys of the membership, which involved a consideration of factors such as gender, age, and place of residence, whether in urban, suburban, or rural areas.[3]

Thus the sample consisted of sixteen men and sixteen women, sixteen (eight men, eight women) from urban areas, seven (four men, three women) from small towns or suburban areas, and nine (five men, four women) from rural areas. Though I interviewed eight activists from each of the four locations it was not always possible to reflect the overall social composition within each area. For example in one urban area there were only three women active, so I interviewed five men, whereas to balance this in the other urban area I interviewed five women and three men. Fully reflecting the other criteria within the four locations would have been even more complex, given that it was often not possible to ascertain how each interviewee fitted these in advance, so I sought to achieve an overall spread. In relation to the mixture of local and national activists, fifteen (seven men, eight women) were active at a local level, ten (four men, six women) were or had been active at both local and national level, whilst seven (five men, two women) were almost exclusively active at a national level. Regarding age, twelve (eight men, four women) were between thirty and thirty nine years old, ten (five men, five women) between forty and forty nine, six (two men, four women) over fifty, and only four (one man, three women) less than thirty. A more detailed analysis of the social characteristics of the interviewees is provided in Chapter 4. The initial approach to potential interviewees

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3 The quantitative survey of the Green Party membership drawn upon was W. Rüdig, L. Bennie, and M. Franklin, Green Party Members: A Profile, Glasgow, Delta Publications, 1991. This and other surveys undertaken by this team will be further considered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

was by letter, explaining the scope of the research, the form of the interview, and the general areas I was interested in. This was followed by a telephone call to ask whether they would like to participate in the research, and to arrange a time and place for the interview to take place. All of those approached agreed to be interviewed.[4]

The interviews, all of which were recorded, were semi-structured and lasted between one and a half and three hours. Following a pilot trial they were undertaken between July 1996 and January 1997. In all but two cases these were conducted in the interviewee's own home. I was thus able to observe directly aspects of the respondents' circumstances, tastes, and lifestyles. After establishing details concerning social background, the first section of the interview concentrated on life history. This used the device of asking the interviewees to tell me about the places where they had lived from early childhood to the present, combined with significant events in their lives, which not only allowed me to learn about their educational and occupational history, but also revealed something concerning their attitudes towards the environment. The questions here were very open, leading to a biographical narrative which required little intervention on my part. After this the questions became more specific, though still with the intention of encouraging participants to provide their own accounts, emphasising what they saw as important. A section on political socialisation and initial involvement in green politics was followed by a discussion of the

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4 On one occasion after arriving to conduct an interview, the prospective interviewee changed his mind and refused to be recorded or answer specific questions about himself, though he was happy to talk at a general level. As in many ways this interview was unsatisfactory, I decided to select another interviewee for inclusion in the sample as a substitute.

interviewees' conceptualisation of green politics, including their views on its connection with environmentalism and ecology, its relationship with other political perspectives, and its political and social location. The last section explored issues of lifestyle, beliefs, and values associated with their political practice.[5]

In each interview I sought to follow the set questions in my interview schedule, which is included in Appendix 1, though allowing the interviewees answer in their own way. When they were not clear what the question meant, I rephrased it or used one of the prompts I had prepared in relation to each point. In some cases they misheard, misunderstood, or ignored questions and began talking about something else entirely. If I felt it was of interest I would let them to continue, if not I would attempt to bring them back to the question. However, as an interviewer it is not possible to be in complete control of a process which necessarily involves a dialogue. There were times when the interview became a discussion or conversation, though this could contribute towards maintaining a rapport as well as allowing me to follow up on areas of particular interest, with such exchanges often leading to insights on important points. I did find the whole interviewing process to be something of a balancing act, since many apparent digressions were highly revealing, but I was also aware of the need to make sure I covered all the questions in the time available. Some interviews did considerably over-run, but often the interviewees were happy to

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5 On the structure and practice adopted for these interviews the accounts I found most useful were: N. Fielding, 'Qualitative Interviewing', in N. Gilbert, Researching Social Life, London, Sage, 1993, pp. 135-153; K. Plummer, Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Problems and Literature of a Humanistic Method, London, Unwin Hyman, 1983; and I. Helling, 'The Life History Method: a Survey and a Discussion with Norman K. Denzin', Studies in Symbolic Interaction, Vol. 9, 1988, pp. 211-243.

continue, though on three occasions when this was not possible I had to return at a later date to complete the remaining questions.

Some descriptions of the interviewing process in the sociological literature, particularly relating to life history research, observe that usually it is necessary to interview people on a number of occasions in order to be able to distinguish between public to private accounts. Jocelyn Cornwell defines public accounts as those common sets of meanings which reproduce or legitimate taken for granted assumptions likely to be provided towards those in some kind of position of authority. She describes such accounts as excluding those experiences and opinions considered as unlikely to meet with official approval, seeing such public accounts as the likely response to questions posed by an interviewer. Private accounts on the other hand, Cornwell regards as arising from the thoughts and feelings accompanying personal experience, which are likely to take the form of telling a story to someone not viewed as involved in a power relationship with the person concerned. Thus she suggests that in order for an interviewer to elicit private rather than public accounts it is necessary to secure personal introductions to prospective interviewees and to build up a relationship of trust over a series of visits.[6]

This may be a requirement when approaching some social groups, and in connection with the exploration of certain subject areas. However, I did not find this to be necessary in the case of the Green Party activists. This was despite the fact that apart from two interviewees whom I already knew quite well, and four whom I had met briefly, the majority of interviewees knew nothing

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6 J. Cornwell, Hard Earned Lives: Accounts of Health and Illness from East London, London, Tavistock, 1984, especially pp. 11-17.

whatsoever about me apart from my initial letter and the brief telephone conversations that followed, and I was in a similar state of ignorance about them. Though we generally met as strangers, the early discussion of life history, particularly concerning accounts of childhood, generally led to an opening up on the part of the interviewee. When this took place a strong rapport became established from the outset. Possibly this was assisted by the fact that in terms of social, educational and cultural background, I was similar to most of the people I was interviewing, as well as showing myself to be in sympathy with many of their beliefs. I also found it easy to identify with many of the experiences they described, something which was generally apparent to the interviewees. Thus even in the later sections dealing with more specific questions, the interviewees would, without being asked to do so, often volunteer information that referred to areas that would normally be regarded as private and intimate.

As to how this can be related to Cornwell's criteria, there are some problems with her conceptualisation, for though she recognises that private accounts may be just as selective and partial in their way as public accounts, she does not adequately establish the extent to which what is considered as public and private is likely to be socially constructed in different ways, dependent upon factors such as class or cultural milieu. For example there are ways in which those involved in green politics seeks to challenge some conceptions of what is public and private by highlighting how the two spheres impact on one another, as will be apparent from the activists' discussions of lifestyle considered in Chapters 4 and 5. An alternative approach to this issue is in terms of Erving Goffman's notion of layers of performance, for though it is difficult to establish

the extent to which an account is a private one, it is perhaps easier to distinguish between frontstage and backstage performances.[7] Seen in such terms the activists are members of a team who could be seeking to ensure that even in a one to one encounter, that their frontstage performance consistently represented what might be expected to be a Green Party line, whereas backstage amongst themselves they may discuss the same issues with a different level of interpretation.

Goffman's dramaturgical analogy can be applied to attempts by the Green Party to present an acceptable public face, which may even involve elements of deliberate deception, such as in their relations with the media. One example of this is discussed in Chapter 3, relating to the shifting of a contentious debate on the Party's stance towards the European Union at its Autumn 1995 conference to a time when the media would not be present, and replacing it with a series of hastily written and rather anodyne emergency motions to perform for the television cameras. Similarly the exclusion of non-members from meetings at which serious disputes are likely to arise, relates to the intention of allowing members to speak freely, secure in the knowledge that their remarks will not be reported in ways which might damage the Party's public image. On an individual level, as regards the interviews with Green Party activists, there were elements of what might be regarded as public accounts or frontstage performances. When it came to the discussion of green politics, those active in the national party tended to be well versed on the subject through years of practice. There was often the sense that some of the responses were rehearsed in that they had obviously discussed

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7 E. Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969.

some of the areas many times before. This was also apparent in the occasional tendency to insert slogans or well-worn phrases into their discussions. Yet at the same time I felt that there was also a degree of candour in that many did not toe what might be seen as the Party line, and those questions which were unexpected did result in what seemed to be open and spontaneous responses. With the local activists their discussions were much less practiced and it was apparent that many had never previously attempted to systematically explain what their political beliefs were.

I attempted to discourage possible attempts by the activists to present what might be seen as an 'official' Green Party position by emphasising when arranging the interview that they had no need to prepare anything beforehand, since I was not intending to ask questions concerning the intricacies of Green Party policy. Also, along with assurances that the interview material would be treated anonymously, I told the activists that I was not interested in internal Party disputes and had no wish to uncover anything damaging to the Party. Instead I made it clear that my main purpose was to elucidate those feelings and meanings based on their own experience, that they as individuals attached to their involvement in green politics. This was something I sought to reinforce throughout the interview, my most common interjection being to ask them, 'what do *you feel* about it?' in relation to any particular question.

Previously I had given the activists only a general outline of the main areas I wanted to cover, so whereas a prepared response might have been more comprehensive, there would also have been a loss of spontaneity, which I hoped to gain through their first impressions in answer to questions of which they had no prior expectation. Another factor which may have influenced the apparent

openness of the respondents was that though introducing myself as a researcher, I could also be seen as one of 'us', because I was a fellow Green Party member, and due to the inside knowledge I had acquired concerning Green Party affairs. So though on the one hand I could be regarded as an outside 'expert' who had come to study them, at the same time I was one of 'us' to whom private accounts or backstage performances could be given. No doubt as Goffman suggests, behind backstage performances are many other layers of performance, so it is difficult to establish the level of authenticity of any account, but I felt they were being relatively open and honest with me, and not that they were telling me what they thought I should hear, or telling me what they thought I wanted to hear.[8]

A final area to be considered relates to the possibility that my line of questioning could have been leading out answers when focusing on specific areas. To counterbalance such a charge the

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8 Only once during my research did I find myself experiencing considerable doubt concerning the sincerity my informant. This was not during the course of any of the main interviews, but when talking informally to another Green Party activist I came to suspect him of being some kind of infiltrator. On voicing my suspicions to another activist I was told that I was not the first person to have raised this as a possibility, but that there had been no attempt to expose the person in question because the Green Party had nothing to hide, besides which such an action might lead to his being replaced by someone less obvious and more competent. Whilst there are no documentary sources relating to infiltration of the Green Party, there are a number of references to increasing levels of interest in the green movement on the part of the police and the security services. See for example: C. Elliott and D. Cambell, 'Police Chiefs Want Anti-Terror Squad to Spy on Green Activists', The Guardian, 27 March 1996, p. 1; and the letters in response, The Guardian, 30 March 1996, p. 26. Also see L. O'Hara, Turning Up the Heat: MI5 After the Cold War, London, Phoenix Press, 1994, pp. 87-96. For a sociological examination of this phenomenon in a U.S. context see: G. Marx, 'Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant: the Agent Provocateur and the Informant', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 80, No. 2, Sept. 1974, pp. 402-442; and G. Marx, 'External Efforts to Damage or Facilitate Social Movements: Some Patterns, Explanations, Outcomes, and Complications', in M. Zald and J. McCarthy, The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics, Cambridge Mass., Winthrop, 1979, pp. 94-125.

high degree of reflexivity of the activists needs to be considered. For the most part they were familiar with the conventions of academic research, and far from being intimidated by the process, seemed interested in what I was trying to do. They could also be regarded as something of experts in their field of knowledge, who knew their own minds and answered the questions (or not) on their own terms. When they thought I was on the wrong track they told me so, and many exchanges involved such disagreements. In asking the activists to present their beliefs systematically, I did go through each point stage by stage. However, in each area I would begin with an open question with subsequent interventions aiming to clarify points they had made. Only when I was failing to get a response would I sometimes introduce examples of the kind of things I was looking for, but this kind of prompting did not necessarily lead to answers that related solely to points I had introduced. Their responses often surprised me and certainly could not be described as always conforming to my expectations. This became even more apparent at the analysis stage when a number of issues emerged which were not implicitly present in the questions, such as the importance of notions of responsibility, and the relationship of means and ends. Conversely, some questions which could be seen as containing prior assumptions, such as those concerning the importance of the environment or ecology, often led to these assumptions being confounded.

Analysing the Interview Material

The in-depth interviews resulted in more than sixty hours of tapes. Since large sections of the interview material was not directly relevant to the current thesis, I only transcribed the responses to sections 3 and 4 of my interview question schedule concerning conceptions of green ideology, its social and political location, lifestyle, and values (see Appendix 1). However, I did listen through the early sections on life history and political socialisation to note any points relevant to the analysis, particularly concerning the interviewees' backgrounds and social characteristics. Having completed the transcription stage, I created an index for each interview, noting positions adopted in response to each of the questions. This information was then transposed onto a central index which sought to compile a composite picture of the activists' responses. In order to structure this material, I began to classify it under different subject headings relating to their environmental, economic, social, political, and ethical concerns. As I did so I noted clusters of similar responses, which resulted in a series of sub-headings. This led to a revision of the index, in which I combined the headings of environment and economics and created a separate category for lifestyle. Then I went back through the transcripts examining the extent to which each activist addressed this range of topics, and whether there were any other significant issues which had been missed. This resulted in a basic typology of the activists' descriptions of the main elements of green politics, which provided the structure for the presentation of the findings from the interviews in Chapter 4. To illustrate each point quotes were selected from the transcripts to represent a more detailed sense of the context within

which the activists understood these issues. This interpretation of what constitutes a green ideology according to those involved then provided the basis for a further analysis in relation to the theoretical perspectives from Chapter 1 which makes up Chapter 5, and the consideration of the political location of green ideology in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

As a means to uncover what a green ideology consists of the different forms of investigation adopted acted as a useful complement to each other. The documentary sources, though giving little explicit discussion of the Green Party's ideological outlook, did provide essential background to the study which suggested how underlying beliefs manifested themselves within the spheres of organisation, strategy, and policy. The participant observation allowed me to see how the activists behaved collectively, especially as regards the translation of their beliefs into everyday practice, in their social relations as well as in the Green Party's more official activities. However, though the participant observation had been essential in providing necessary context, it was the in-depth interviews which were at the core of the study by revealing how beliefs were understood by individual participants. The process of conducting these interviews was the most challenging and memorable experience I have had as a researcher. I can only hope that my presentation of the findings goes some way to conveying the wealth of information I found them to contain, and that my interpretation of this material

provides a portrayal of the worldview of my informants that they would recognise as an accurate one.

CHAPTER 3

THE GREEN PARTY

Introduction

Having outlined the methodological approach being adopted, this Chapter provides an examination of the available documentary sources relating to the Green Party. These include Party publications, published accounts by prominent members, and the findings from existing academic research on the Green Party, supplemented by reference to comparative studies of green parties which seek to identify general trends in outlook and practice . Drawing upon these sources, the Green Party of England and Wales, to give it its full current title, will be described in terms of its historical development, membership, structure, strategy, and policy.[1] There will also be a consideration of the Party's ideology, though as suggested in both the Introduction and Chapter 2, most documentary sources provide little discussion of the beliefs underlying the Party's practice. Nevertheless, this examination will provide necessary contextual background for the qualitative investigation of the ideological outlook of Green Party activists in the following Chapters.

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1 The Party has changed its name several times. Initially known as PEOPLE (always in upper case), it became the Ecology Party in 1975 and the Green Party of the United Kingdom in 1985. Its current title follows the granting of autonomous status to the Green Party of Scotland in 1990 and the Green Party of Northern Ireland in 1995.

Foundation and Historical Development[2]

Britain's Green Party was the first ecological political party in Europe and in global terms was preceded only by the United Tasmania Group and the New Zealand Values Party, both of which were established in 1972.[3] The Green Party was founded under the name PEOPLE in early 1973. PEOPLE grew out of a discussion group called the Club of Thirteen which was formed in Coventry in 1972. The inspiration for the founding of the group and original focus for their discussions was a published interview with Paul Ehrlich on the subject of overpopulation and the ecological crisis.[4] At this time, following a period of relative economic prosperity, Britain was experiencing an economic recession and the Club of Thirteen held some of its meetings on the premises of a factory in the process of being put into receivership.

The prevailing economic climate undoubtedly contributed to the sense of imminent crisis experienced by the group which influenced a decision by four of its founding members, Tony and Leslie Whittaker, Mike Benfield and Freda Saunders, to form a political party to campaign on the issues that concerned them. These included

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2 Though corroboration has been sought from other sources, this section is substantially based on three previous accounts of Green Party development: W. Rüdig and P. Lowe, 'The Withered "Greening" of British Politics: The Case of the Ecology Party', Political Studies, Vol. 34, 1986, pp. 262-284; S. Parkin, Green Parties: An International Guide, London, Heretic Books, 1989, pp. 212-233; and D. Wall, Weaving a Bower Against Endless Night: An Illustrated History of the UK Green Party, London, Green Party Publications, 1994.

3 On Tasmania see, P.R. Hay and M.G. Haward, 'Comparative Green Politics: Beyond the European Context, Political Studies, Vol. 36, 1988, pp. 433-448. On New Zealand see, S. Rainbow, 'The New Zealand Values Party: Challenging the Poverty of Progress 1972-1979' in W. Rüdig (ed.) Green Politics Two, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, pp. 111-133.

4 P. Ehrlich, 'A Playboy Interview', in Project Survival, Chicago, The Playboy Press, 1971, pp. 65-111.

population growth, resource depletion, pollution, unnecessary production and the expansion of a wasteful and materialistic consumer society, all of which were seen as constituting a potential threat to the long-term survival of humanity and the planet. A new political party was required because the existing parties had proved themselves unable to tackle these issues due to their commitment to unrestricted economic growth. In the words of an early PEOPLE leaflet:

> We can no longer rely on politicians who repeatedly fail to recognise root causes of unrest and disillusion, who place false idols before the electorate and hold out untenable promises to secure re-election.[5]

In January 1973 an advert was placed in their local paper to announce the existence of the new Party and attract prospective members. The inaugural meeting of PEOPLE was held in March 1973 and was attended by over fifty people. Some attempts were made to involve other environmental groups. A conference was scheduled for June 1973 and efforts were made to invite representatives from every environmental organisation, including local groups, but the initial response was so poor that the conference was cancelled.[6] One significant contact was made with *The Ecologist* magazine and its editor Edward Goldsmith. Following the response to *The Ecologist*'s report *A Blueprint for Survival*, Goldsmith had attempted to set up something called the Movement for Survival, aiming to influence government to implement the report's recommendations.[7] Though

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5 'Are the Days of Pressure Groups and Influence Over', PEOPLE, 1973, p. 2.
6 According to one of the organisers of this conference with whom I discussed this issue, no sooner had it been cancelled than the responses began to flood in.
7 E. Goldsmith et al., A Blueprint for Survival, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972.

nothing came of this, Goldsmith and others associated with *The Ecologist* became active in the new Party which adopted some of the proposals outlined in *A Blueprint for Survival.*[8] Goldsmith also stood as a PEOPLE candidate in the two general elections held in 1974. In February PEOPLE stood five candidates (plus two affiliates) gaining an average of 1.8 per cent of the vote in those seats contested. In October there were four PEOPLE candidates (and one affiliate) receiving a lower average vote of just 0.7 per cent.

In the summer of 1974 PEOPLE held its first annual conference which was the occasion of ideological conflict between groups on the right and left of the Party. Several of the founding members including the Whittakers and Benfield were former Conservative Party activists. Some of the views held by Goldsmith could also be interpreted as right wing, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. The focus for the conflict at the conference was a document called *A Manifesto for Survival* drafted by Leslie Whittaker as a statement of Party policy. Whilst its proposals on alternatives to economic growth, energy, agriculture and social welfare received broad acceptance, some felt that parts of the document took positions more usually associated with the political right. This was particularly the case regarding aspects of a policy intended to reduce the population of the UK to a level of approximately thirty million. Included was a proposal to halt immigration from all sources and to offer grants to encourage emigration. Though no reference was made concerning the ethnicity of potential immigrants or emigrants, nevertheless this proposal was criticised on the grounds that it could be interpreted

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8 For the first mention of PEOPLE in The Ecologist see, E. Goldsmith, 'Britain's Ecological Party', The Ecologist, Vol. 4, No. 2, Feb. 1974. From 1975 onwards The Ecologist contained a regular Ecology Party Newsletter.

as being potentially racist The manifesto was accepted though in considerably amended form.[9] The following year a revised population policy was passed which, though accepting some need for immigration controls (as long as these did not involve racial discrimination), explicitly rejected attempts to encourage emigration as part of a strategy to stabilise the population of the UK.[10]

This policy was approved at a second conference held in 1975 at which PEOPLE changed its name to the Ecology Party. Arguments between left and right resurfaced once more, this time in response to a new manifesto drafted by Peter Allen who represented what could be seen as the socialist wing of the Party. This document, *A Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, (known as the *MfSS* for short) was eventually approved and has continued to be the Party's principal statement of philosophical outlook and policy.[11] However, these debates had aroused a considerable level of personal conflict to the extent that many of those involved including the Whittakers, Benfield and Allen largely withdrew from Party activity.

The Ecology Party managed to survive and this period saw the election of its first local and county councillors. A new leadership began to emerge, including Jonathon Tyler, David Fleming and Jonathon Porritt, representing a more pragmatic approach and a principal focus on electoral activity. In 1978 the decision was taken to stand at least fifty candidates in the forthcoming general election in order to qualify for a television party political broadcast.[12] This

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9 Wall, 1994, op. cit. p. 22. An unpublished draft of PEOPLE's A Manifesto for Survival, 1974, is held by the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, MSS 50.
10 See, A Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, the Ecology Party, 1975, p. 18.
11 A Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, 1975, ibid.
12 See, J. Porritt, 'Gearing Up for the General Election', The Ecologist, Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1979, pp. 20-22.

represented a considerable investment in financial and other resources for a Party that had only 650 members at this time. In the May 1979 general election fifty three candidates gained an average 1.5 per cent of the vote whilst in the June European elections three candidates got an average of 3.7 per cent. The strategy was successful in that membership rose to over 5,000. However, in electoral terms the efforts of the Ecology Party remained marginal. In the 1980 local elections they raised their vote to an average of 5.8 per cent, but in the 1983 general election 108 candidates obtained only a one pre cent average vote, whilst in the 1984 European election seventeen candidates got only a 2.6 per cent average. Meanwhile membership, having slumped to 2,500 in 1982, had by this time risen again to the 5,000 level.

Though the Party had seen itself as receptive to people and ideas from the counter-culture since its early days, with the increase in membership after 1979, a number of people representing alternative perspectives and lifestyles joined and became prominent activists.[13] This accentuated the diversity of views in the Party since this group tended towards an anarchist perspective and favoured a decentralised politics, endorsement of non-violent direct action, and the strengthening of links with other sections of the green and alternative movements. Thus this period saw the first Green Gathering (a festival held near Glastonbury in 1980), the foundation of Ecology Party CND (later Green CND), and the involvement of Ecology Party members in direct actions against the transportation of nuclear waste and the deployment of nuclear weapons.

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13 On the party's early openness to the alternative movement see, 'Ecology Party Newsletter', in The Ecologist, Vol. 5, No. 9, 1975.

However, some within the existing leadership were ambivalent about the use of non-violent direct action and building stronger links with counter-cultural groups, believing this would present a detrimental image of the Party. This faction preferred to aim for the political mainstream and to further this end wished to create a more centralised and conventional Party predominantly geared towards contesting elections. Some even suggested the appointment of a single Party leader. These moves were strongly opposed by those favouring a more decentralised approach and increased participation in extra-parliamentary actions. When their intentions were initially frustrated some of those favouring a centralised and electoral approach formed a group called Maingreen to promote their favoured candidates to positions on the Party Council. Some regarded this as an undemocratic attempt to hijack the Party and a heated debate followed. The result was that Maingreen's two major protagonists, Paul Ekins and Jonathon Tyler resigned from the Party after the 1987 general election.[14]

In that election the Green Party (having changed its name from the Ecology Party in 1985) got an average of 1.3 per cent of the vote in the 133 constituencies contested. Over the next two years green issues began to receive a high media profile, with the other political parties seeking to adopt green policies. In this favourable climate the Green Party began to increase their share of the vote with 646 candidates averaging 8.6 per cent in the May 1989 council elections, followed by their best result ever in the June 1989 European elections. Having decided to contest all seventy eight constituencies, they gained an average of 14.9 per cent of the total vote,

14 On the Maingreen episode see Econews, No. 31, 1986 and the differing accounts in Parkin, op. cit., pp. 226-228; and Wall, op. cit., pp. 58-61.

significantly higher than any other European green party, though unlike these sister parties who benefited from proportional representation systems, the British Greens achieved no representation as a result. Nevertheless, the Green Party was able to retain all its deposits and in all constituencies but one managed to beat the Liberal Democrats into fourth place. It seemed as though green politics had firmly established itself in Britain and membership soared from 9,000 to 18,500.

This level of success was not sustained. One factor contributing to this was that whilst the media spotlight was trained upon the Green Party it underwent another period of factional conflict. Once again a group within the leadership sought to reform the Party with an initiative called Green 2000. This aimed to create a small executive, separating regional representatives onto a less powerful body. As part of this process, votes at conference were to be allocated to local Party representatives, rather than being left with those individual members able to attend. These reforms were largely opposed by Party activists, but at the 1991 conference the Green 2000 proposals were approved, largely through the efforts of the motion's supporters in arriving with large numbers of proxy votes collected from passive members. Even though the supporters of Green 2000 were elected to ten of the eleven positions on the new Executive, they failed to transform the fortunes of the Party in the way they had intended. The new Executive created disaffection amongst Party activists, who perceived it as acting in an arbitrary way. It also became riven with internal disputes and within a year nine members had resigned, including the Party's Chair, Sara Parkin,

who chose to do so by releasing a highly damaging statement to the press just before the Party's 1991 autumn conference.[15]

The Green Party's showing at the 1992 general election had been a disappointing 1.3 per cent of the vote for their 253 candidates, though in Wales Cynog Dafis was elected as a joint Plaid Cymru/Green MP. By this time membership had fallen to below 8,000. and since then, largely ignored by the media, membership has further declined to about 4,000 though a core of committed activists remain. Attempts have been made to leave the period of internal conflicts behind and in 1994 the Party celebrated its 21st birthday. Whilst the Green Party has not been successful in conventional terms apart from the election of a few parish, district and local councillors, it undoubtedly has had an effect on the policies of the other parties and raised the awareness of green issues amongst the electorate.[16] It has also had some successes outside the electoral field such as the introduction into Parliament, in conjunction with Friends of the Earth and Plaid Cymru, of the Home Energy Conservation Act, finally passed in 1995, and the Road Traffic Reduction Act which became law in 1997. The Green Party has also been prominently involved in extra-Parliamentary campaigns such as those against the government's road building programme, the transport of nuclear waste, and the Criminal Justice Act.

Another important dimension has been the Green Party's influence on other green parties, not only in Europe, but also worldwide. Many green parties were directly inspired by the example of the British Greens, often adopting significant elements of their

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15 On Parkin's resignation see The Guardian, 27th June, 1991, p. 1, and 28th June, 1991, p. 1 and p. 3.
16 Following the 1995 local elections the Green Party has a total of 25 local and district councillors (including 3 Independent Greens); see, Green Link, No. 18, May 1995, p. 2.

philosophical outlook and policy positions. Such interchanges were by no means one way with the Green Party being influenced in turn by developments within green parties in other countries. Maintaining strong international links between green parties has been seen by all concerned as integral to developing a global perspective. Perhaps the Green Party's greatest achievement has been that of managing to keep going and continuing in its attempts to try and bring about those changes which it believes to be required, despite the adverse circumstances within which it has had to operate.

Explanations of Green Party Development

There have been few academic studies of the UK Green Party. The most comprehensive of these to date regarding analysis of the Party's development can be found in a paper by Rüdig and Lowe entitled 'The Withered "Greening" of British Politics'.[17] Rüdig and Lowe state the need to use a combination of comparative and qualitative methods to examine, 'the form and content of political action which is taken in specific situations'.[18] Thus, 'the development of green parties cannot be understood without consideration of the emergence of particular issues and protest movements, and the concrete circumstances of party formation'.[19]

Following an account of the development of the Ecology Party over its first ten years, Rüdig and Lowe seek to explain why it proved less successful in generating support than its European counterparts. This they attribute to a number of factors specific to

17 W. Rüdig and P. Lowe, op. cit.
18 ibid., p. 264.
19 ibid., p. 265.

a British context. Principal amongst these they cite the Ecology Party's position in regard to the UK electoral system. Whilst forming a political party in Britain is simply a matter of deciding to become one, as PEOPLE's founders discovered to their surprise, the first past the post system makes it difficult for small parties to get elected.[20] A further handicap is that a financial deposit is required for each candidate in a national election (which in 1984 rose from £150 to £500), which given the absence of state funding or backing from corporate or institutional donors places a heavy burden on the Party's membership base.

A second factor emphasised by Rüdig and Lowe concerns the Ecology Party's relationship with organisations representing the environmental and conservation movements. Rüdig and Lowe point to the way in which the British conservation organisations, such as the National Trust and the Council for the Protection of Rural England, have a history of working in liaison with government, which has involved taking a non-partisan political stance, a strategy that the newer environmental groups, such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, have tended to follow. This has meant that they have avoided formal links with the Green Party on the grounds that this would be likely to prejudice their access to other political parties and government organisations.

This relates to a third factor, which concerns the role of the state with regard to its response to environmental concerns. As well as providing a consultative role for environmental organisations, in Britain state agencies have attempted to keep different issues and campaigns separate. Also the government has sought to contain

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20 Partly for this reason the Green Party has always favoured Proportional Representation as a fairer method of electing representatives.

potential opposition through the public enquiry system and by siting high impact projects in remote areas. Rüdig and Lowe also cite Britain's low growth rate, along with its plentiful supplies of coal and oil, as a reason why there was less of a requirement for large scale projects, such as a rapid nuclear power construction programme. Hence, they argue that, compared to the rest of Europe, there was less environmental destruction in Britain with less mobilisation of opposition.

Rüdig and Lowe highlight the comparative weakness of the anti-nuclear movement in Britain as a fourth factor, noting that even after increased opposition to nuclear power did emerge following the Windscale Inquiry, it did not ally itself to the Ecology Party. Related to this was the fact that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, though opposed to nuclear power in principle, never made this a significant part of its campaign against nuclear weapons. Though many greens were active in CND, it tended to concentrate on making its strongest appeals towards the Labour Party, despite Labour's failure to make a firm commitment on unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The fifth factor discussed by Rüdig and Lowe relates to the role of the New Left. They argue that in Britain the student movement of the 1960s was relatively weak and that much of its energy was absorbed in the creation of an alternative counter-culture. Those groups remaining engaged in political activities which might be given a New Left label have mainly worked within the Labour Party or on the fringes of it. With the exception of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA), few groups on the left have shown much interest or commitment towards environmental issues. This is unlike the situation on the continent

where the New Left has played an active role in the green movement and the formation of green parties.

These are all important factors though they do not really address more fundamental questions such as: why PEOPLE/the Ecology Party arose when it did; why it chose that particular set of issues around which to orient itself; and why it took the form of a political party. For example, although Rüdig and Lowe do refer to the atmosphere of industrial decline prevailing at the time of the Party's formation, they do not make it clear that this was the period dominated by two prolonged strikes by the National Union of Mineworkers, the OPEC oil crisis, and a government-imposed three day working week. As well as contributing to a severe economic recession this highlighted the vulnerability of modern industrial society to disruptions of energy supply and seemed to confirm the predictions of energy shortages made in publications such as *The Limits to Growth* and *A Blueprint for Survival*.[21] Amongst some groups, including the founders of PEOPLE, it did seem that modern industrial society was on the brink of collapse and that the very survival of humanity, and even the planet itself, was threatened.

This would account for the sense of urgency felt by PEOPLE's founders, and why they initially focused on issues such as population reduction, agricultural self-sufficiency, energy and resource conservation, and pollution control, as well as areas like employment, income, social welfare, and education. They also felt that the whole of modern society was going in the wrong direction with the other political parties all firmly committed to economic growth, which PEOPLE felt was the main cause of the problems they identified.

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21 Meadows et al., The Limits to Growth, London, Earth Island, 1972; and E. Goldsmith et al., A Blueprint for Survival, op. cit.

Thus they saw a need for a political alternative to bring about a radical transformation of society to bring it back into balance with the environment and ensure its long term survival. This rationale was clearly stated in the 1975 *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*:

> .... this Manifesto is more than a statement of a new ideal and a list of steps by which it can be achieved, it is a challenge to the established view of the nature of our present social, political and economic system. It is such a radical challenge that it can only be borne by a new independent political party, for it requires the existing political forces to change too many of their basic philosophies. From henceforward the main political battles will not be between Left and Right in the traditional sense but between the supporters of a steady state economy and growth.[22]

Rüdig and Lowe are aware of the link between economic factors and environmental concern, but in this context they argue that a low growth rate partly accounts for the relative lack of success of green politics in Britain. However, this does not explain why a green political party was established in the UK before others arose in the rest of Europe. Another gap in their account is that Rüdig and Lowe do not examine the kind of policies advocated by PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, or the extent to which these differentiated them from stances taken by the existing political parties. Yet it was precisely because of the short-term approach of the other parties and their shared commitment to undifferentiated economic growth that the founders of PEOPLE saw a need for a political alternative to transform society and ensure its long-term stability.

Although acknowledging the growth in environmental awareness Rüdig and Lowe also do not really discuss which groups were likely to be receptive to such appeals, apart from noting elements of a common worldview with the alternative counter-culture which emerged

22 Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, 1975, op. cit., p. 4.

in the 1960s. Though the Ecology Party did draw support from this section of society, this was not their only constituency or source of membership. The Ecology Party was by no means a homogeneous group, as demonstrated by early conflicts between right and left, and later conflicts between the centralists and the decentralists which reveal different outlooks and agendas. These conflicts were to become more exacerbated as the Maingreen and Green 2000 episodes reveal, though as it will be argued below, it would be an oversimplification to see divisions within the Party in terms of a single polarity. Also, it must be stated that such conflicts involved quite small numbers of people active in the Party at national level and had relatively little effect on large sections of the membership who were either passive or predominantly active at a local level.

It could also be said that Rüdig and Lowe do not sufficiently place the development of the Green Party within the context of competition with other parties. The tendency of the environmental and other pressure groups such as CND to take a non-aligned political stance, and for groups associated with the New Left to work through the Labour Party, can be seen as derivative of the British electoral system. There is no real advantage for interest groups to work with marginal parties, which goes a long way towards explaining the failure of the Green Party to gain support from groups which would otherwise provide it with an obvious constituency. Rüdig and Lowe do consider the argument that the establishment and rise of the Social Democrats in the early 1980s may have prevented the Greens from establishing themselves as a third force in British Politics, but discount it on the grounds that the two parties were not appealing to the same constituencies. Yet the high level media focus on the SDP may have distracted attention away from the Greens. Also after the

relative failure of the SDP/Liberal Alliance in 1987 and the hasty merger of the two parties into the Liberal Democrats they experienced a period of declining popularity at the same time that the Greens were gaining greater prominence. This culminated in the 1989 European election where in all but one of the seventy eight mainland constituencies, the Greens beat the Liberal Democrats into fourth place. Thus it could be argued that the rise and fall of the SDP/Alliance/Liberal Democrats during this period did affect the political opportunities available to the Greens, though this was only one factor amongst many.[23]

Another aspect not considered by Rüdig and Lowe is the role played by the media. In its early days the Ecology Party received little attention and it was only when its strategy of qualifying for a television election broadcast in 1979 proved successful that they found a means to reach a wider audience. Yet even after this the Party found it difficult to gain access to the media. It was only when green issues generally began to receive widespread coverage and became accepted as an issue in mainstream politics after 1988, that the media began to give significant coverage to the Green Party. Despite the tendency of the media to focus on the quirkier aspects of the Party's activities or to perpetuate distorted stereotypes, the Greens did get opportunities to put their views across. After the 1989 European election, coverage began to be unfavourable, paying particular attention to conflict within the Party. Since then the

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23 In a later paper Rüdig does consider this as a contributory factor, see W. Rüdig, L. Bennie and M. Franklin, Green Blues: the Rise and the Decline of the British Green Party, Glasgow, Department of Government, University of Strathclyde, 1993, pp. 27-28. For an analysis of the Green Party's success in the 1989 European elections explained in terms of political competition see, C. Rootes, 'Britain: Greens in a Cold Climate', in D. Richardson and C. Rootes (eds.), The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 66-90.

Greens have found it difficult to get any serious media coverage which has further contributed to the current period of decline.[24]

These additional factors are important in that they affected not only the development of the Green Party, but also the form and content of its ideological outlook. Nevertheless, despite their lack of consideration of these additional factors, Rüdig and Lowe's article remains a useful starting point for any examination of the Green Party, particularly for their highlighting of the importance of the economic, social and political conditions within which the new environmental politics had to operate in the British national context. Another useful aspect of Rüdig and Lowe's approach is their emphasis on its failure to attract the support of the conservation and environmental movements, partly due to a longstanding government tendency to co-opt and contain environmental protest. As Rüdig and Lowe's account was written before the resurgence of the Green Party in the late 1980s this partly explains their neglect of factors which became more apparent over time.

In their work elsewhere both Rüdig and Lowe have gone some way towards addressing some of these issues. For example Lowe and Goyder have considered the historical development of the environmental movement and noted that waves of concern seem to

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24 Another striking factor in this context is that the foundation of many of the European green parties, most notably in the case of *Die Grünen*, involved a number of prominent public figures who already had a high media profile. In Britain this was not the case with the Party's founders consisting of a group of quite ordinary concerned citizens. Admittedly some of its leadership, such as Jonathon Porritt, and to a lesser extent Sara Parkin, did subsequently become public figures, though this was generally after they had withdrawn from Green Party activity. The only public figure who ever became prominent in the Party was David Icke, though given some of his later activities, this proved to be more of a curse than a blessing (see the discussion of Icke's subsequent career in Chapter 6).

coincide with particular stages of economic cycles.[25] Rüdig has noted the failure of most theoretical examinations to adequately consider why environmental issues in particular should have provided a focus for a new politics. He places a high emphasis on the importance of concrete environmental problems and sees that some issues, such as opposition to nuclear power, may act as a stronger mobilising force than others. Yet whilst his own notion of ecological cleavage describes one aspect of the focus of this new politics, it goes no further in being able to explain it or clarify why it should become combined with a particular set of social and economic concerns.[26] However, Rüdig's most significant contribution to research in this area has been his quantitative surveys of Green Party members which will be discussed below.

Membership

As was seen in the discussion of historical development, the Green Party's membership has remained comparatively small over time, though subject to occasional periods of rapid growth followed by decline. The first period of sizeable growth coincided with the Ecology Party's participation in the 1979 general election and the impact of its first party political television broadcast when membership jumped from about 650 to over 5,000. The Party proved unable to retain the allegiance of many of these new members and after declining to 2,500. It was only in the mid-1980s that membership

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25 P. Lowe and J. Goyder, Environmental Groups in Politics, London, Allen and Unwin, 1983.
26 W. Rüdig, Explaining Green Party Development, Glasgow, Department of Government, University of Strathclyde, 1990.

began to revive, moving from less than 5,000 in 1985 to 9,000 in early 1989, partly benefiting from the high media profile given to environmental issues following events such as Chernobyl, rainforest destruction, ozone depletion and predictions of global warming. From the 1987 general election, with the environment becoming a political issue in its own right, the Green Party's prominence increased culminating in the high vote it received in the 1989 European Election. At this point membership approached a peak of over 18,500, though as in 1979 a large proportion of the people who joined at this time left within a short period. Thus in the 1990s, a period of conflict within the Party, combined with a diminishing emphasis on environmental issues in the media and amongst other political parties, contributed to the decline in Green Party membership to its current level of approximately 4,000.[27]

Very little was known of the social composition and other characteristics of the Green Party membership prior to the quantitative surveys undertaken by Rüdig, Bennie and Franklin from the University of Strathclyde. The initial survey was undertaken in November 1990 with a questionnaire being sent to more than half of the Party's members. The response rate of fifty one per cent meant that twenty nine per cent of the membership were represented.[28] This survey was undertaken during a period of rapid decline of membership and included people who had joined at the Party's peak in mid-1989 but had failed to renew a year later (allowing for an

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27 The figures given here only include national party members. Many local parties operate local membership schemes but no records are available on the numbers involved. After 1990 the Scottish Green Party became autonomous so its membership is not included after that date.

28 W. Rüdig, L. Bennie and M. Franklin, Green Party Members: A Profile, Glasgow, Delta Publications, 1991. Follow-up surveys were carried out in 1991 and 1992, see W. Rüdig, L. Bennie and M. Franklin, Green Blues, op. cit.

additional three month period of grace). Thus it could be said that these findings may not be wholly representative since the sample was taken during such an unusual period of the Party's history.

Rüdig et al. contend that despite the preponderance of short-term members at this time, these would be less likely to respond than more established members, as most of them had never become involved in Party activities and many had effectively withdrawn their membership by failing to renew. However, the other possible reasons that Rüdig et al. give for possible non-response were more likely to apply to more active members, such as being put off by the length of the questionnaire, believing that the information given could be of potential use to political opponents, or regarding this kind of survey as being somehow 'un-green'.[29] Rüdig et al. further argue that the profile of short-term members did not significantly differ from that of more longstanding members though they do not specify whether this extends beyond demographic indicators, socio-economic background and political characteristics to include other factors. In this respect it would have been useful to see a comparison of responses by short-term or passive members which might distinguish them from long-term or active members.[30]

Though the complete findings of Rüdig et al.'s surveys have yet to be published, their preliminary report has indicated a number

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29 W. Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit. pp. 12-13. During my interviews with Green Party activists, when the subject of these surveys came up, I was frequently told by my respondents that they had not participated because they were too busy to fill it in (the questionnaire was twenty four pages long). Also some prominent Party members stated to me that they had not completed the questionnaire because they felt that they could be easily identified from their responses. For a discussion of what might constitute being 'un-green', see Chapter 4.

30 Rüdig et al., 1991, ibid., pp. 61-62. Rüdig et al. do discuss differences in relation to reasons for joining or leaving but only identify factors such as when, why and how they joined as significant.

of highly distinctive characteristics displayed by the Green Party's membership. At the time of the survey forty seven per cent of members were women; with the core of the membership between twenty five and forty nine years old. Geographically sixty per cent lived in the south of England, where fifty per cent described themselves as living in a town or city with a population of over 50,000, twenty four per cent in a settlement with a population of between 5,000 and 50,000, and twenty six per cent in a location with a population of less than 5,000. Educationally, sixty seven per cent had studied for, or were studying for a degree, most likely in the Arts or Social Sciences, with eighteen per cent qualified at a postgraduate level. In employment terms, fifty two per cent were in full-time work, twelve per cent part-time, eight per cent in full-time education and only five per cent unemployed. Of those in work more than fifty per cent are in professional occupations, with forty four per cent in the public sector, though there is also a sizeable group (nineteen per cent) representing the self-employed. Though no figures are given on income, in housing terms sixty nine per cent are owner occupiers. Only twenty nine per cent had been previously members of other political parties (and of these fifty per cent had been in the Labour Party), though fifty per cent had been members of Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace, and forty per cent had been in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Rüdig et al. estimate the average length of membership at two years, though they identified a core of activists who had been members for more than ten years. Some thirty seven per cent of respondents described themselves as active, though only twenty seven per cent reported spending two hours or more a week on Party activities.[31] After discussing

31 W. Rüdig et al., 1991, ibid., p. 40

members' views on internal structure, reasons for joining and leaving, party activities and future prospects, Rüdig et al. conclude that though the Green Party is in a poor position regarding loss of membership and in financial terms, a core of committed members remain, thus the Party is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting findings of Rüdig et al.'s survey relates to the educational and occupational profile of Green Party members. Following the discussion in Chapter 1, these results show distinct parallels with research on members of environmental groups undertaken by Cotgrove and Duff in the 1970s, and with those commentators who have highlighted the predominance within the green movement of the members of the New Middle Class. However, not all Green Party members could be described as part of the new middle class. In relation to Offe's suggestion that the green movement also attracts the support of decommodified groups including students, women not in paid work, the unemployed and sectors of the self employed, from the figures provided by Rüdig et al. it can be shown that whilst the numbers of Green Party members working in professional occupations or the public sector, in full-time education, or those who are self employed, noticeably exceeds the average for the general adult population, the figures for unemployed members only slightly exceed it, whilst the figures of those who are sick, disabled, retired, or looking after the home do not. From this it is not immediately apparent that the Green Party membership particularly represents those who are the most economically or politically marginalised.[32] In this connection it could also be pointed out that observation of Green Party meetings and conferences also

32 W. Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., p. 25.

reveals a very low level of participation by members of ethnic minority groups, though Rüdig et al. give no figures on this.

Rüdig et al.'s survey of the Green Party's membership certainly provides an invaluable addition to our knowledge by providing a detailed picture of its social composition. Where this kind of quantitative approach is less useful is when it comes to uncovering more complex issues such as motivations, values and beliefs as will be seen when the some of the findings of the Strathclyde team relating to the subject of ideology of the Green Party are considered later in this Chapter. Before coming to this some examination of other areas of Green Party activity is required, for though some aspects of a common outlook can be attributed to similarities in social background, this does not mean that members necessarily agree over questions of organization, strategy and policy.

Organisational Structure

Other academic studies of the Green Party have tended to focus on organisational structure. McCulloch has examined the Ecology Party in terms of whether it could be seen as having a traditional or alternative party structure.[33] In these ideal types a traditional

33 See, A. McCulloch, 'The Green Party in England and Wales' Environmental Politics, 1, (3), 1992, pp. 418-436, and A. McCulloch, 'Branch Organisation and Activity in Environmental Politics' Environmental Politics, 2, (1), 1993, pp. 20-39. These articles are an updated version of an earlier paper; see A. McCulloch, 'The Ecology Party and Constituency Politics: Anatomy of a Grassroots Party', paper presented at the UK Political Studies Association Conference, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1983. McCulloch's ideal types are a response to Müller-Rommel's categorisation of green parties as either reformist or alternative; see, F. Müller-Rommel, 'The Greens in Western Europe: Similar but Different', International Political Science Review, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1985, pp. 483-499. Müller-Rommel's position will be discussed in the section on ideology below.

party has leaders, a hierarchical structure, key roles, formal committees and a constitution. Such parties aim to increase their membership and win elections in order to gain control of the machinery of government. By contrast an alternative party is egalitarian and anti-hierarchical, operating informally to bring about a change in popular consciousness through individual and collective action. After describing the Ecology Party's structure in terms of its main principles, which he defines as self reliance, community, grassroots democracy, diversity and non-exploitation, McCulloch concludes, not surprisingly, that it includes a variety of styles both traditional and alternative. Nevertheless, he argues that despite the intention on the part of some members of resisting the tendency towards Michel's iron law of oligarchy, the recent streamlining of the organisation, giving control to a small executive, suggests that what began as a radical alternative party may have become more traditional over time.

A more polemical discussion of Green Party organisation has been provided by Evans, who contends that its structures have not been adequate for meeting the Party's objectives.[34] He perceives that this problem has arisen as a result of the Party moving away from its original aims and objectives, though he does not specify exactly in what way this process has supposedly occurred. What he does say is that whereas the Party aimed to incorporate within its structures core principles such as decentralisation and participatory democracy, over time such commitments have been compromised due to conflicts between centralist and decentralist factions. Evans presents

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34 G. Evans, 'Hard Times for the British Green Party', Environmental Politics, 2 (2), 1993, pp. 327-333. For a more detailed discussion see G. Evans, The Green Party: An Inside Analysis, unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1991.

a rather simplistic description of these two groups and the disagreements between them, echoing the portrayal given by Lowe and Rüdig. Thus the decentralists are shown as advocating grassroots activities, extra-parliamentary direct action and lifestyle politics, whilst the centralists are described as favouring a strong central Party, streamlined structures, an emphasis on contesting elections and a focus on ecological policies rather than on social or fringe concerns.

In this conflict Evans obviously favours the centralists. Indeed many of his arguments would seem to do little more than reproduce the analysis provided by the advocates of Green 2000.[35] Therefore Evans characterises former Party organisation as chaotic and undemocratic in that structures designed to encourage participation actually frustrated representative democracy and prevented effective decision making. For these reasons he endorses the attempt by Green 2000 to put in place what they argued would be an accountable and democratic framework which would enable the Party to more successfully gain media access, attract new members and campaign electorally. These moves were not successful, Evans argues, because decentralist activists succeeded in regaining control of the Party through their ability to exploit its internal structures to create new power bases. From this Evans concludes that the Party represents two distinct political cultures or ideologies, resulting in apparently irreconcilable conflicts over strategy by small groups of activists. This view depends on the assumption that it is possible to understand the Green Party almost entirely on the basis of one

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35 See for example the accounts given by Parkin in The Guardian, 27 June 1991, op. cit., p. 1, and 28 June 1991, op. cit., p. 1 and p. 3; and her statements in an interview given to BBC Radio 4's 'On the Ropes' programme, 18 April 1994.

episode arising in response to a particular issue, yet even here Evan's own partisanship means that he fails to fully analyse the background of this conflict.

Evans' account of the ultimate failure of Green 2000 ignores any critical scrutiny of the group proposing these reforms, which might have revealed how what many activists perceived as their undemocratic behaviour and their inability to work with others, contributed to their incapacity to bring about the changes they claimed would result from their reforms. Though Evans admits that the Green 2000 initiative exacerbated factional disputes, he still approved of it as a necessary step, even though it all but destroyed the Party in the process and left a set of structures in place that are arguably as problematic as the ones they replaced. As to his hypothesis that the Green Party consists of two irreconcilable political cultures or ideologies Evans provides no corroborating evidence that this is the case. Whilst there has been an ongoing dispute concerning organisation, Party democracy and strategy, resulting in the emergence of two polarised factional groupings on this particular set of issues, these groups cannot be portrayed as simply as Evans represents them. Far from wishing to concentrate exclusively on extra-parliamentary activities and lifestyle politics, many so-called decentralists have demonstrated a strong commitment to electoral activities at both local and national levels, whereas many so-called electoralists have failed to match their words with this kind of practical action. It would also be misleading to conclude from the Green 2000 episode (and the Maingreen incident that preceded it) that two separate, unified and competing worldviews exist within the Green Party. Such events would need to be set against a consideration of other disputes within the Party where different sets of views have

emerged. This would reveal a far more complex situation in which shifting alliances can be observed which change from issue to issue, as my own observations of voting patterns at five Green Party conferences confirmed. Though disagreements within the Party do sometimes result in factional conflict, it would be misleading to conclude from this that there is not a strong set of common beliefs which the vast majority of Green Party members share, even whilst arguing about the best way to put those beliefs into practice.

Another point is that such disputes involve relatively few people. Evans seeks no confirmation of his portrayal from local activists or ordinary Party members, the vast majority of whom do not attend conferences or concern themselves with national Party affairs. Thus by concentrating exclusively on events at a national Party level, he neglects local Party viewpoints, which tend to ignore such conflicts, preferring instead a pragmatic approach which sees no conflict between grassroots campaigns and contesting elections. This reveals a strength of McCulloch's account, for though this remains largely descriptive, he does place considerable emphasis on the importance of local grassroots activities. As each local Party is relatively independent, McCulloch found that structures at this level depended on the initiatives and preferences of individual branches.

Both McCulloch and Evans observe that the Green Party has sought to represent its basic philosophical principles, such as participatory democracy and decentralisation, within its organisational structures, but actually give little discussion as to how this actually takes place. There are a number of ways in which party structures can be seen as having evolved to reflect such aspirations. The most obvious manifestation of this resides in the notion that power should be held at the lowest appropriate level, thus embodying the principle

of decentralisation. Since local Parties largely run their own affairs, though with support from the national Party, they are able to choose their own structures, write their own constitutions, and decide which activities to involve themselves in. Membership is administered by the national Party, which retains a significant proportion of capitation fees before passing the balance on to local and area Parties. Local Parties may have local membership schemes, though such supporters are not entitled to vote in national Party affairs. Local Parties in each region are part of an area party which offers a co-ordinating role. Representatives from each area are elected to sit on national Party bodies, formerly to the Party Council, currently to the Regional Council. Area Parties may seek autonomous status from the national Party. So far only two have done so, becoming the Scottish Green Party and the Northern Ireland Green Party.

Another core principle which the Green Party has sought to incorporate within its structures is that of participatory democracy. To this end the Party aims to empower individual members, who all have the right to attend any Party meetings at whatever level. Though the Party does have formal structures and procedures, within these it seeks to operate as informally as possible to encourage maximum participation. So, apart from meetings of representative bodies like the Executive or Regional Council where ordinary members do not have voting rights and may not speak unless invited to do so, other meetings and activities aim to directly involve as many members as possible. This includes Green Party Conference which remains the supreme governing body of the party. Having circulated all reports, motions and amendments in advance, these are then discussed in small workshops before going to plenary debate and voting. Previously all members who attended Conference could vote, but since

1991 voting is undertaken by mandated local Party delegates, though all members can take part in debates. In actuality there has been little real change as only activists tend to go to Conference, thus delegates are to an extent self-selecting. Also relatively few local Party meetings prior to Conference scrutinise the agenda in detail and so they are only likely to mandate on what are seen as key issues, leaving delegates to use their discretion as to how they vote.

The Party holds two main national conferences a year which are attended by between three hundred and five hundred members. Rüdig found that about eight per cent of members regularly attend Conference, with eighteen per cent attending at least one.[36] Conference serves a number of functions such as approving policy, electing committee members and providing political education through fringe and workshop sessions, though perhaps its most important role is a social one. Green Party conferences generally take place in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere which encourages informal contact between fellow members from all over the country. For such a small political party it would appear to be vitally important for its members to come together in this way to renew their commitment amongst a body of like-minded people. So, as opposed to Rüdig et al. who evaluate the Green Party's conferences as being relatively unsuccessful, it could be argued that these serve an essential function, which perhaps explains why, despite its limited resources the Party continues to hold two a year.[37]

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36 Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., pp. 41-42. Since Rüdig et al. were writing at a time when there had been a surge in short-term membership, these figures should be revised slightly upwards. An average attendance of four hundred represents ten per cent of the current (1995) membership.

37 Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., p. 48. It could also be argued that this frequency of conferences also gives the Party's activists the feeling that they are achieving something in constantly drafting and updating policy.

It is at Conference that the Green Party's attempts to provide alternative structures and practices are most apparent. For example each plenary session is preceded by an attunement, a period of silence and stillness lasting a minute in duration. Also during all debates and workshops there is an unwritten rule that everyone has a right to speak and be listened to, even if they are talking complete nonsense. So, even when strong disagreements emerge, there is a sense that other viewpoints should be respected in a spirit of tolerance. Another principle the Party seeks to embody is that of consensus. Though this remains more of an ideal than a reality, nevertheless it is something that the Party's *Constitution* specifies should be actively sought in all meetings wherever possible.[38] All of these practices reveal a strong similarity with procedures used by the Quakers, and thus could possibly be attributed to that source.[39]

Whilst conflict in the Green Party may be seen as undesirable, it has often been unavoidable in some arguments over organisation, strategy and policy. Attempts are made to contain this as much as possible by means of procedures designed to fairly represent all viewpoints, as at Conference where an equal number of those for and against a motion will be called to speak. These procedures are supervised by the Party's Standing Orders Committee. Where serious disputes do occur within the Party, whether at local, regional or national level, arbitration can be sought in which the participants are

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38 Constitution of the Green Party, the Green Party, 1992, Section 8 v.

39 Rüdig et al. found that seventy two per cent of Green Party members did not see themselves as belonging to any religious group. Of those who did, affiliations to all religions were under-represented as compared to the general population. Two exceptions to this were the five per cent who were practicing Quakers and the two per cent who described themselves as Buddhists. See, Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., p. 29

brought together to resolve their differences with the assistance of Party's Mediation Committee.

In relation to the principles of decentralisation and participatory democracy, the Green Party also seeks to be anti-hierarchical. The most obvious way in which this is apparent is in its resistance to the notion of having a leader. Though some within the Party have argued that having a leader would provide a recognisable figurehead for the media and the electorate, such a view has remained a minority one, with the vast majority of the Party's activists remaining implacably opposed to any such notion. Despite this there has been a tendency for the media to select certain figures as quasi-leaders, but this has invariably resulted in an unsatisfactory outcome as far as the Party was concerned.[40] Leadership in the Green Party remains collective. National officers are elected annually and can only remain in post for three consecutive terms. Mechanisms also exist for the recall of officers, though such a process has only been invoked on one occasion and then it was withdrawn before being fully implemented.[41]

All elections within the Party use the Single Transferable Vote system of Proportional Representation with the option of negative voting if some candidates are regarded as unacceptable. National officers are elected by postal ballot of the membership and committee members by Conference delegates. Local and regional Parties choose their own electoral systems, generally selecting prospective parliamentary candidates and regional representatives by postal ballot and officers by a show of hands at a meeting of which advance

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40 The main figures who have been elevated in this way have been Jonathon Porritt, Sara Parkin and David Icke.
41 This occurred in 1992 when there was an attempt to recall three members of the Executive, but since they resigned the motion was withdrawn.

notice will have been given to all members entitled to vote. The Party's *Constitution* only stipulates that two posts require a gender balance. Thus one of the Party's two Speakers must be a woman, as is one of the two co-chairs of Regional Council.

Given that they constitute approximately half the membership, women play a prominent role in the Party and currently occupy about a third of the elected posts at national level. Though the intention exists to achieve balanced representation at all levels of the Party, despite the fact that they show only slightly lower levels of activism than men, women are less likely to speak during meetings and debates. There also tend to be fewer women candidates than men representing the Green Party, especially in national elections. Moves have been made to address some of these issues, and when compared with other political parties, the Green Party does show a high level of awareness concerning issues of gender.[42]

The Green Party's organisational structure has remained close to the original form in which it evolved, with the Party's national conference acting as the main governing body. Prior to 1991 the running of the national Party was undertaken by a twenty five person Party Council, elected by a combination of area Parties, a postal ballot of the entire membership, and by the annual Party conference. Otherwise most of the work of the Party was left in the hands of local Parties or a number of committees who reported to conference and the Party Council. Following the reforms of 1991 as advocated by the Green 2000 group there was an attempt to switch from what was regarded as an activist democracy to a representative

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42 See Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., p. 44. See also the report on the 'Women by Name Conference' in Green Link, No. 22, December, 1995, pp. 6-7. The conference was held to discuss the experience of women in the Green Party and how they could further empower themselves.

democracy by restricting conference voting to mandated local Party delegates. This was combined with the separation of the old Party Council into a smaller Executive, directly elected by a postal ballot of the entire membership, and Regional Council which consists of two representatives from each of the area Parties, of which there are currently thirteen. The intention was that a small Executive would be able to make rapid and effective decisions with each officer being elected to a specific post with a defined area of responsibility. After considerable problems during its first year of operation, this system has since worked reasonably well as regards the day to day running of the national Party. However, this has left Regional Council, notionally responsible for strategy, democratic procedures and disciplinary issues, with a more amorphous role, something perhaps acknowledged by the fact that rarely have the full number of posts on it been occupied. Though there is dissatisfaction within the Party concerning some aspects of the existing structure, there seems to be little enthusiasm for embarking on another round of organisational and constitutional reform, the feeling being that members' energies should be directed in more important directions.

Strategy

Other than the discussion of conflicts between centralists and decentralists, described in terms of arguments over an electoral approach versus extra-parliamentary action, little attention has been given to Green Party strategy in the academic literature. Over time the Party has engaged in a range of activities. Apart from the tasks of administration and the holding of meetings and conferences, these

include policy formation, participation in elections and other campaigns, alliance building, and seeking to educate Party members and the general public through its own publications, and through access to local and national media. McCulloch does mention the importance of such activities, but does not go into detail as to how these chosen means relate to the ends which the Green Party wishes to achieve.

The *Constitution* of the Green Party states that its objects and aims are:

> a) to develop and implement ecological policies consistent with the Philosophical Basis of the Party as expressed in the *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*;
> b) to that end to win seats at all levels of government;
> c) to organise any non-violent activity which will publicise and further the first two aims.[43]

Dealing with these requirements in turn, the Green Party has over time developed a detailed set of policies on a wide range of issues. Whilst the content of these policies will be considered in the next section, the process of policy formation has always been an important component of the Party's strategy. As well as being seen as providing credibility for its desire to be taken seriously as a political party, particularly during election campaigns, the policy making process allows the Party to apply its general outlook to specific issues in order to see how these ideas might be realised in practical terms.

As an activity this also assists the development of skills and expertise within the Party as interested members form working groups to examine particular issues and explore possible options. A policy document is then drafted and scrutinised by the Party's Policy

43 Constitution of the Green Party, 1992, Section 3, Objects and Aims.

Committee prior to being put before Conference for approval. Here the document and any amendments to it will be debated in workshops and in full plenary sessions. So, in addition to clarifying the Party's stance on a variety of topics, this process has the function of educating Party members and allowing them to improve their political debating skills. Given that the Party currently stands little chance of achieving power at a national level to implement such policies, the whole process does seem to consume an enormous amount of time and effort, some of which possibly could be better spent elsewhere. This is all the more pertinent as, except during elections, little attempt is made to acquaint the public with these policies. On occasions Green Party policies have been appropriated by other political parties though generally without acknowledgement.[44]

Along with policy formation, electoral activity remains a principal focus of Green Party strategy. For such a small party this places a considerable strain on its resources, but elections do provide it with a means, through leaflets, canvassing and the media, of getting its message across to the public as well as providing opportunities for recruiting new members. As was stated earlier, the Green Party has contested elections at all levels, though it is only at a local or county level that they have succeeded in gaining representation. Such successes have largely been achieved when local Parties have done the necessary groundwork, targeting constituencies, and putting adequate resources into campaigning over

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44 A recent example of this has been Tony Blair's endorsement of the stakeholder principle, which is already an established Green Party policy, see MfSS, op. cit., 1993, Sections EC (Economy) 630-632, and WR (Workers Rights) 610-616. Whilst it is difficult to establish whether the adoption of similar policy positions result from direct borrowing or have been arrived at independently, it can be said that the Green Party have developed a number of policies prior to their being advocated by other parties.

a long period, as has been done in Stroud where the Party now has four district councillors and Oxford which has two Green city councillors and two county councillors. In a recent review of the Party's electoral activities, the Strategy Working Group suggested that greater emphasis needs to be placed on building support and experience through concentrating on local elections, although the Party does continue to recognise the importance of retaining a national profile. The current plan concentrates on campaigning in between fifty and a hundred target constituencies in general elections, thus ensuring that the Party makes the most of its rather limited resources whilst still qualifying for a national election broadcast. Also given the way the current electoral system works to the disadvantage of small parties, it has been suggested that the Green Party should put more effort into seeking the introduction of Proportional Representation for all elections, possibly in conjunction with other parties and groups.[45]

With regard to relations with other political parties, the Green Party has generally been tolerated as long as it does not constitute a threat. There has been some hostility, especially from Labour activists, when a Green candidate has been perceived as 'splitting the vote'. Sometimes this has led to other parties asking a local Green Party to not stand candidates in particular constituencies, though such requests have rarely been acceded to unless the arrangement has been a reciprocal one. On one occasion a local Green Party in Ceridigion did endorse and campaign on behalf of a Plaid Cymru candidate, Cynog Dafis, who in turn voiced his support for many Green Party policies. He was subsequently elected as a joint Plaid

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45 See, Green Party Strategy: A Basis for Renewal, the Green Party, 1993; and General Election Strategy, the Green Party, 1995.

Cymru/Green MP in 1992. Though there was much support for this in the national Party it produced conflict in Wales, where the regional Party were able to use the Party's *Constitution*, which technically forbids such arrangements, to call for the suspension of a number of those involved. The Party has since amended its *Constitution* to prevent such situations arising in the future.

Another dimension of the Green Party's strategy has been its involvement in a variety of campaigns at both a local and national level. Over time the Party has campaigned on a number of issues such as opposition to nuclear power and nuclear weapons, homelessness, travellers' rights and the Poll Tax. More recently the Party's campaigns group has, in conjunction with Friends of the Earth and other groups, drafted legislation with the intention of introducing it into Parliament. Already two successes have been achieved with the Home Energy Conservation Act becoming law in 1995, and the Road Traffic Reduction Act in 1997. These efforts are continuing with the current campaign in favour of the Road Traffic Reduction (UK Targets) Bill. Apart from this kind of conventional parliamentary lobbying on single issues, the Party also supports the use of non-violent direct action (NVDA). The Ecology Party advocated non-violent resistance as early as 1975, formally endorsing this as a strategy in 1981. This commitment was reaffirmed in 1992 with the formation of the Green Party Committee of 100, to provide training in NVDA and co-ordinate the Party's involvement in actions which have mostly been directed against targets such as road construction projects and nuclear power facilities.

Many of these campaigns have been undertaken in conjunction with other groups. This could be seen in terms of building and maintaining links with other parts of the green movement. In this

there has been little sign of attempts by the Party to proselytise or to seek to take over campaigns to gain credit for itself. Rather the Party's involvement in such campaigns seems to take the form of a genuine desire to work with other concerned groups and individuals on issues of mutual concern. The Green Party also maintains a presence within the counter-cultural community through its participation in green gatherings, green fairs, environmental centres, LETS schemes and other initiatives. Recently renewed effort has been put into attempting to build alliances with other groups and organisations seen as sharing common concerns. Informal meetings have been organised to increase dialogue between those active or prominent in such groups and representatives of a wide range of organisations are invited to address Green Party conferences. As well as the joint campaigns over the Home Energy Conservation Act and Road Traffic Reduction Act undertaken in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, recently the Green Party has been involved with protests against the Criminal Justice Act and actions against the government's road building programme. It is difficult to evaluate how successful all this has proved. Such groups often welcome the support, but whilst there seems to be some respect for the integrity of the positions taken by the Green Party, they are also regarded as a bit of a talking shop, and given their lack of access to power they are seen as having little to offer other groups in concrete terms. There also seems to be little sign that those involved in the wider green movement are prepared to translate such mutual support into a commitment to vote for the Green Party. Even though little tangible benefit is received in return, demonstrating solidarity in this way could be seen as an important part of the Party's cultural identity.

A further aspect of the Green Party's strategy relates to its ability to disseminate its message through the media and other communications. Throughout the Party's history the national media have shown little inclination to take it seriously except for the brief period when green issues had a high profile at the end of the 1980s, culminating in the comparatively high vote received by the Party in the 1989 European elections. Apart from this exception the Party has been largely ignored by the national media except for the reporting of internal disputes, the occasional editorial suggesting that the Party is somehow implicitly authoritarian, or stories that aim to show the Party as quaint or eccentric. Thus the media seems intent on perpetuating a stereotyped view of the Party. Despite this, the Green Party, desperate to get any media coverage at all, often colludes in this process by providing stunts that conform to media expectations. The Party also sometimes goes the other way in attempting to hide possible controversy from the media, though this tactic can be counter-productive. For example at the Autumn 1995 Conference, when the BBC sent a team for the first time in three years, the Party responded by disrupting its schedule and staging a series of uncontroversial topical motions rather than let the cameras see the Party in the midst of a heated debate revealing its ambivalence towards the European Union. The result was an anodyne item on the evening news, instead of a lively debate on a topical issue that might have attracted interest in the Party's distinctive stance on the subject of Europe. Given the lack of satisfactory national media coverage the Party has sought to make more use of local and alternative media outlets.

On the whole the Party has not proved to be very adept at getting its message across to the public. This is perhaps because

green politics is based on a different set of assumptions from those held by the established political parties. Being less familiar it is not so easy to explain. This is not always apparent to Green Party members who have already made this cognitive leap, to whom it seems obvious what it is all about. Also since Party members tend to be highly educated, they have not yet learnt to present their message in a simple way, though there is an awareness that this must be done if the Party is to improve its electoral performance and recruit new members. As regards recruitment, Rüdig et al. argue that the Green Party has tended to recruit from a small section of society which already shares a similar socio-economic background and outlook.[46] To a large extent this has undoubtedly been the case, despite some attempts to reach out to groups beyond this constituency, such as the working class, the urban poor, women, the elderly, and ethnic minorities. These have all been perceived as target groups on the grounds that they are more directly affected by environmental problems than the population at large.

The Green Party's own publications are predominantly directed at its own members. As well as producing a variety of pamphlets and information sheets, the party publishes a general newsletter, *Green World* (formerly *Econews*), which is sent to all members, and *Green Link*, which is aimed at Party activists. The content of both these publications tends to be practical, such as giving reports of what the Party has been doing nationally and locally, along with articles on issues of concern, discussions of strategies and policies, as well as providing letters pages, diaries of events and lists of contacts. Whereas the Party's publications formerly carried very little discussion of politics and philosophy, these topics now receive more

46 See Rüdig et al., 1991, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

regular attention. This is part of a programme intended to provide more political education for members which has also included a number of conference workshops and fringe meetings on these themes. This is in addition to already existing training schemes to teach members such things as media presentation skills and the practicalities of running election campaigns.

Green Party publications also provide regular information on the progress of other green parties internationally. Maintaining strong international links is seen as important as it reminds the Party that it is part of a global movement. As well as keeping up informal links worldwide, the Green Party has particularly close ties with the Scottish, Northern Irish, and Irish green parties through the Green Islands Network, and is also a part of the European Green Co-ordination. Amongst other functions this latter body seeks to formulate a common policy stance between all European green parties. In this the Green Party has been influential since, unlike most of its European counterparts, it does not have a large proportion of its activists in elected government posts, so it is more able to devote time to developing policy.

Though views differ within the Party over which aspects of this strategic repertoire should be given the most emphasis, the general feeling seems to favour a diversity of approaches. There are also arguments over how to position the Party. One form this debate has taken has arisen in response to those who have argued that as British politics has shifted to the right, the Green Party should seek to fill the gap on the left. Whilst there is some sympathy for this argument, there is also a deep ambivalence about it in some quarters, partly because of the wish to portray the Party as different from established politics and thus going beyond the left-right spectrum,

and also because there is a feeling that many potential green voters might be put off if the Party took an overt leftist stance. Similar arguments can also be heard over whether to concentrate on promoting environmental policies, or to place more emphasis on social issues. The consensus seems to be that both are important since environmental and social issues cannot be meaningfully separated. These debates over the political location of green politics will be returned to in Chapter 6.

Policy

From the time of its inception the major focus of PEOPLE went far beyond mere environmentalism. The Party's concern about waste, pollution and environmental destruction was part of a general critique of the problems of modern industrial society, its impact on the lives of people within it, and of the whole direction in which it appeared to be going. Thus early documents produced by PEOPLE showed that the Party was against the consequences of unrestricted economic growth, the production of unnecessary goods, repetitive and unfulfilling work, destructive technologies such as nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, rampant materialism and consumerism, overpopulation, social decay, and social injustice. In order to counter these trends the Party sought to develop policies that would promote a steady state economy, the conservation of resources, environmental protection, the production of durable and necessary goods, satisfying and worthwhile work, humanised technologies, and the building of decentralised self-sufficient communities that would encourage the seeking of alternative satisfactions to materialist

consumerism. Integral to this would be the creation of a more equitable society, a reduction in population and an improvement in the situation of countries of the Third World.

The policies developed by PEOPLE to respond to these issues were initially quite sketchy and contained both conservative and progressive elements. The conservative aspects of its early policies partly reflected the political origin of the party's founding members. This could be detected in an early draft policy proposal to make trade unions illegal apart from those which operated within individual companies, and in some aspects of the proposed population policy discussed earlier. However, as will be seen below these proposals were soon considerably revised and therefore must be placed in the context of a wide package of policies, some of which involved original and radical stances, such as advocating the introduction of a National Income Scheme. Later known as the Basic Income Scheme or Citizens Income, this has remained a central component of Party policy, and states an intention to provide to all citizens a minimum income sufficient to cover all basic needs. Looking at early policy as a whole it can be seen that this package of concerns meant that PEOPLE's outlook was radically different from that of other political parties. Though as the Party's policy developed its views were both modified and extended, nevertheless, it remained committed to this original set of core concerns. This can be demonstrated by examining how over time these concerns came to be translated into specific policies designed to address all major aspects of economic, social and political life.

Of all of the Party's policies, those relating to the creation of a sustainable economy could be seen as having prime importance. In response to its concerns over the consequences of unrestricted

economic growth PEOPLE's earliest policy statements advocated the use of taxation to penalise the production of short-life disposable goods and subsidies to encourage the manufacture of durable commodities. This basic economic approach of advancing sustainability through green economics has continued over time with taxes combined with subsidies being envisaged as principal mechanisms for dealing with a variety of policy areas, as will be seen as each in turn come to be discussed. Most taxes would be levied by local government. As well as taxes to redistribute the national wealth and protect resources, there would be a turnover tax on large businesses designed to encourage them to break-up into smaller units, thus making them more accountable.

The Green Party would also seek to reform the financial system so that responsibility for national finance and community credit would be removed from private banks and placed under the control of central and local government, community banks and credit unions. Another intention would be to change the criteria of economic success away from measures such as GDP to more meaningful indicators which would take into account the environmental and social impacts of economic policy. There would also be more support for local and informal economies, such as through a recognition of the contribution of domestic labour and an identification of the household as a centre of economic activity. A final dimension of Green Party economic policy involves an intention to reduce trade through tariffs on imports and exports. This relates to the party's opposition to notions of supposedly free markets and free trade, since these are regarded as destructive of the environment and social relationships. As will be seen in the discussion of foreign policy, this cannot be seen as a form of narrow protectionism since it also seeks to embody the

principles of equity, devolution and self-reliance on both a local and a global scale. The aim is to ensure the basic material security and aspirations of the whole of humanity whilst recognising the limits of natural systems.

Surprisingly, one of the policy issues least developed by the Party is that relating to environmental protection. This is partly because its policies on other issues would result in a better environment as a whole, which the Party sees as preferable to creating specific protected areas. So whilst wishing to conserve habitats and species diversity through the creation of an Environmental Protection Agency, the party has always put a greater emphasis on the conservation of resources. This would operate through taxes on resources and pollution, with the aim of reducing waste and encouraging durability, efficiency, ease of repair, re-use and recycling. As regards energy, given the party's continued opposition to nuclear energy, all nuclear power stations, reprocessing, and other atomic facilities would be shut down. Meanwhile the Green Party would pursue energy conservation measures whilst shifting to investment in renewable sources of energy and combined heat and power stations, as part of an integrated and publicly owned energy supply industry. Whereas the Party does favour energy taxes, these would necessarily be combined with policies to alleviate fuel poverty.

On transport, the Party has always sought to restrict new road building and dependence on private cars. Instead it would seek an expansion of the rail and canal network for freight along with a greatly improved public transport network. The Party also argues that the creation of integrated communities and the application of land use planning criteria would considerably reduce the need for

travel, whilst decentralised production and a reduction in trade would avoid the unnecessary shipment of goods.

One early aim of the Party was to make Britain self-sufficient in food, preserving agricultural land, discouraging monocultures and the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, whilst encouraging a sustainable form of small-scale mixed farming and the production of healthy food. Over the years the emphasis has shifted from expecting to achieve self-sufficiency to the promotion of self-reliance, though essentially agricultural policy has remained much the same, opposing the Common Agricultural Policy and adopting programmes for organic farming along with sustainable forestry and fisheries. The Party also aims to phase out intensive rearing methods as part of its animal rights policy which would also ban hunting and end vivisection. Since the expectation is that its agricultural programme will involve less mechanisation and more people working on the land, it is hoped that these policies will both enhance the countryside and revitalise the rural economy.

These policies also relate to the Green Party's programme on land and housing. This seeks to prevent the further expansion of urban areas whilst creating communities that are sustainable in social and cultural terms as well as environmental ones. One way the Party intends to deal with these issues is by addressing the whole subject of land ownership through Land Value Taxation. Originally known as Community Ground Rent, this policy involved the idea of a commission to redistribute land. Thus this policy aims to prevent property speculation and encourage environmentally sound use by charging low rents for land kept in an environmentally sustainable way. As currently formulated Land Value Taxation embodies the principle that, 'no person and no body should have absolute control of land, but

only particular rights over it. These rights to specific agreed categories of use should be under the control of the community'.[47] This principle also can be related not only to protecting the land but guaranteeing access to it. As regards housing the Party would seek to improve existing housing stock with most homes being made available through local councils, housing associations, co-operatives and self-build groups. Construction would be governed by low energy use criteria with mixed use occupation being encouraged through land-use planning, so that homes and workplaces could be in close proximity.

On employment the overall intention is to provide useful and satisfying jobs whilst allowing for flexible work patterns. The Party expects work to be created in areas such as agriculture, energy efficiency, repair and recycling. It would establish Community Employment Agencies and Community Savings Banks to help small businesses, co-operatives and the self employed. However, the Green Party argues that a wholly new approach is required to the way that work is organised and understood, with a forty hour week of formal employment for all seen as being neither possible nor desirable. It would address these issues through the implementation of the Basic Income Scheme, which by paying an adequate living wage to all would allow for flexibility, job-sharing and time off to study, whilst also recognising the contribution of informal work such as housework and the care of children, the sick and the elderly. As was mentioned above, as PEOPLE the Party showed an initially negative view of the role of trade unions. This soon changed to a commitment to workplace democracy, with all workers having a right to join a trade union, to strike and to picket. The Party's workers' rights policy

47 MfSS, 1995, op. cit., LD 201.

also expects that the workforce will actively participate in management decisions, especially as regards converting production to environmentally and socially benign products. All of this would be enforced by a system of Labour Courts and through the concept of stakeholding by which workers, employers, shareholders, consumers and the community would be involved in decisions affecting them.

Regarding education the Green Party wishes to implement a gradual change to the existing system. As well as introducing comprehensive nursery provision, the intention is to end selection based on the ability to pay, but the Party would allow independent or experimental schools and support parents who chose to educate their children at home. Overall the Party seeks a holistic approach to learning which would be community based and include practical or experiential components, with examinations being replaced by continuous profiling of pupils. Education would be open to the whole community and there would be an expansion of further and higher education to allow for an expanded provision of adult education.

On health policy the Green Party favours putting more NHS resources into prevention and community or home based care, which would be without charge. As well as banning hazardous substances shown to cause disease, the party would seek to reduce drug prescriptions and increase the availability of alternative forms of health-care. Its main argument that with a better environment and improvements in diet there would be less disease, therefore it would seek improvements in indicators measuring the quality of life.

Another of the Green Party's major concerns has been in the area of democracy and rights. As well as its advocacy of devolution, decentralisation and proportional representation, the Party would seek a cessation of the legislative, judicial and executive roles of the

monarchy and the peerage, thus abolishing any hereditary principle within government. It also wishes to put in place a procedure for the recall of elected representatives and institute a mechanism by which a percentage of citizens in any area will be able to put their own propositions directly before the electorate. The Green Party has also had a longstanding commitment to the implementation of a Bill of Rights, a Freedom of Information Act and the creation of a Data Protection Authority. It would also set up a Commission for Citizen's Rights to investigate complaints of maladministration and extend the rights of groups experiencing discrimination. Thus the Party would create a Ministry for Women to deal with inequalities of representation and issues such as sexual violence. It would also incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into UK law, as well as introducing legislation to safeguard the rights of the disabled, lesbians and gay men, and travellers. The Party would also guarantee the rights of asylum to refugees and oppose all forms of racism. As would be expected the Green Party's policies on crime prevention and justice put the main emphasis on prevention and community policing. As well as favouring more resources for reparation, victim support and mediation, the Party favours rehabilitation of criminals within the community, only imprisoning those who constitute a grave danger to society.

The Green Party has also had a consistent defence policy since its inception. Obviously, given its endorsement of non-violence this involves unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from NATO (with the eventual aim of its abolition), and the closure of all foreign military bases. The Party would also seek to reduce military expenditure and withdraw from the arms trade. Whilst it would retain defensive conventional weapons the Party would like to adopt a

social defence policy which would be community based and adopt strategies of non-co-operation and NVDA. The Party also favours a strengthening of the UN's peacekeeping role, though it is opposed to a fixed membership of the Security Council. Another aspect of its defence policy can be seen in the context of the creation of a green Europe which would be independent and non-aligned. As regards Europe the Green Party remains opposed to the European Union as it is currently constituted. It is particularly critical of the EU's centralising powers, the Common Agricultural Policy, and any notion of a single market or monetary union. Though seeing the EU as fundamentally flawed, the Green Party's current position is to seek reform from within by working with its fellow green parties. Ultimately though, the Party would like to see the EU replaced by a loose confederation of European regions.

Other aspects of the Party's foreign policy relate to a desire to improve the situation of developing nations. To this end the Party argues that a reduction in trade would also reduce exploitation and allow countries currently dependent on exporting their produce to concentrate on meeting the needs of their own populations. The Green Party would increase the level of aid, but target it in ways likely to directly assist community self-reliance for those regions most in need. In connection with this the Party would work for a solution to the debt crisis, reform of the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organisation, and seek to control the activities of TNCs. The party would also like to see the creation of a World Environmental Agency.

As to population, though this was originally one of the Party's core concerns, over time this has come to be given a much lower priority. Current policy states that though the Party would like a

gradual reduction of the UK population, it sees no need for legislation. Rather it expects these changes to come about through planning and through increasing educational and economic opportunities for young women. Such measures are largely discussed in a British context. Behind this lies a recognition of the need to reduce levels of consumption in the developed world, as this is seen as a major contributory factor affecting the exploitation of the developing world. As to global population concerns, the Green Party believes that these must be addressed through dialogue between North and South, though it has suggested that some aid programmes could be aimed at providing education and economic programmes designed to increase women's independence.

Thus it can be shown that the Green Party's environmental concerns are just one component of a package which attempts to apply a number of core principles to a programme of social transformation. These include the extension of democratic participation and social justice, as well as building a sustainable economy which would offer satisfying work and an improved quality of life whilst limiting the power of private capital and large corporations. It can be seen that a major aspect of the Party's solution to current problems lies in the creation of a decentralised society of self-reliant communities. However, such a programme does contain contradictory elements. The most obvious of these concerns the Party's ambivalent attitude towards the role of the state. At the same time as these policies are arguing for greater decentralisation and community control, they would also seem to assume a considerable degree of state intervention, such as in the public ownership of major utilities, like energy, water and transport. Despite this the exact role of the state is rarely discussed. Though there is an

acknowledgement that not all decisions can be taken locally and that government must exist at several levels, there is an absence of a clear demarcation between local government and the national state as regards administration of a number of green policies. However, there is an awareness that the Party will need to gain power at a national level to enact its policies at all, though it is also recognised that this will be a long term project.

Whilst on one level such policies remain hypothetical, given the unlikelihood of the Green Party achieving power in the foreseeable future, they do give some indication of its main areas of concern and of the kind of society it wishes to see brought into being, as well as suggesting some of the values and beliefs contained within its distinctive political stance. However, not all of the beliefs and practices underlying the outlook and political position of the Green Party can be understood by looking at its policies alone. Before going on to explore this further in terms of a study of the beliefs and practices of Green Party activists, it will be necessary to examine existing attempts to explain what constitutes a green ideology.

Ideology

Most discussions of green ideology tend to be based on German sources. This can be attributed to the high public profile achieved by *Die Grünen* and its early electoral successes during the 1980s. A consequence of this has been that portrayals of green ideology have drawn upon *Die Grünen*'s political programme, studies of its development and internal conflicts, the writings of prominent activists, and empirical investigations of its organisation and

membership. Green ideology is thus invariably characterised as founded upon *Die Grünen*'s four main principles of ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy, and non-violence.[48] Emphasis is also placed on tensions within *Die Grünen* arising from different constituencies within the Party and over disagreements concerning which strategic approach will best achieve their goals. The main factional conflicts identified are those between the realists who are prepared to work within the existing political system to achieve reform, and the fundamentalists who do not wish to compromise their beliefs, preferring an approach based on strengthening links with alternative groups and the New Social Movements by means of encouraging extra-parliamentary direct action. Portrayed as allied to the realists are a small eco-libertarian faction who wish to reduce centralised state bureaucracy which they see as undermining liberal democracy. Finally there are the eco-socialists, opposed to capitalism, democratic reformism and state socialism, and wishing to create an alternative order by building links with organised labour, who, over time, have shifted their allegiance from the fundamentalists to the realists.[49] The most commonly cited writings of active members have been those of Rudolph Bahro and Petra Kelly, but though both were prominent in the early days of *Die Grünen*, when they were aligned with the fundamentalists, as the realists became dominant in the Party their influence declined, thus their views can no longer be regarded as representative.[50]

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48 *Die Grünen*, Programme of the German Green Party, London, Heretic Books, 1983.
49 See: F. Capra and C. Spretnak, Green Politics: The Global Promise, London, Hutchinson, 1984; W. Hulsberg, The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile, London, Verso, 1988; and A. Markovits and P. Gorski, The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond, Cambridge, Polity, 1993.
50 On R. Bahro see his books: The Alternative in Eastern Europe, London, Verso, 1978; Socialism and Survival, London, Heretic, 1982;

Regarding theories of green politics based on empirical studies, two main perspectives have emerged. One of these is the New Politics characterisation of the green parties associated with the work of Ferdinand Müller-Rommel and Thomas Poguntke. For Müller-Rommel, New Politics results from a change in values in which the predominant concerns of established forms of politics with issues of economic growth, public order, and national security are replaced by a focus on environmental quality, social equality, minority rights, participation, and alternative lifestyles. In this he is following Inglehart's belief that there has been a shift from material to post-material values which challenges the view that contemporary political conflicts can be described in terms of the conventional left-right political spectrum. Müller-Rommel contends that established political parties have been unable to respond to this new agenda, being hampered by their commitment to economic growth, their restrictive bureaucratic structure, and their attempt to retain an appeal to as broad a constituency of interests as possible. This has led to the growth of New Politics parties, including the green parties, which he sees as nevertheless maintaining a broadly left-wing and egalitarian outlook.[51] Observing that green parties differ in programme and tactics, Müller-Rommel distinguishes two broad types. First there are the reformist parties which are principally focused on ecological

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From Red to Green: Interviews with New Left Review, London, Verso, 1984; and Building the Green Movement, London, Heretic, 1986. On P. Kelly see her, Fighting For Hope, London, Chatto and Windus, 1984.

51 See: F. Müller-Rommel, 'Green Parties and Alternative Lists Under Cross-National Perspective', in F. Müller-Rommel (ed.), New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists, Boulder, San Francisco, and London, Westview Press, 1989, pp. 5-19; and F. Müller-Rommel, 'New Political Movements and "New Politics" Parties in Western Europe', in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler, Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies, Cambridge, Polity, 1990, pp. 209-231.

issues, accept free enterprise, and seek alliances with social democratic parties, amongst whom he includes the British Green Party. He contrasts these with radical alternative parties which seek fundamental social and political change, are opposed to capitalist economic growth, and reject coalitions with social democratic parties, amongst whom he includes *Die Grünen*.[52] However, it must be said that the Green Party is more radical and *Die Grünen* more reformist than Müller-Rommel implies, whilst his suggestion that a different electoral base can be detected for reformist and radical parties is based on figures from just three countries. Thus it is not clear that such a classification can be sustained.

Poguntke follows a similar approach, distinguishing New Politics left-wing emancipatory parties from conservative green formations on the basis of programme, political style, and electoral profile, using data on fifteen green parties from twelve countries. Regarding green party programmes he evaluates these in terms of stances adopted on ecology, opposition to nuclear power, self-determination, feminism, participatory democracy, egalitarianism, social control of the economy, unilateral nuclear disarmament, and support for the Third World, whilst on political style he focuses on participatory structure and support for extra-parliamentary action. Though on electoral profile no figure was included for Britain because of lack of data, on the first two sets of criteria the Green Party received a maximum score, as did *Die Grünen*.[53] Despite this, in distinguishing between different types of green party, Poguntke situates the British Green

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52 F. Müller-Rommel, 'The Greens in Western Europe: Similar but Different', op. cit.

53 T. Poguntke, 'The "New Politics Dimension" in European Green Parties', in F. Müller-Rommel (ed.), New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists, op. cit., pp. 175-194.

Party at the moderate end of the spectrum and *Die Grünen* at the fundamentalist end, though in another article co-written with Müller-Rommel it is admitted that this categorisation is based on a theoretical supposition rather than empirical evidence.[54]

Another approach to the study of green politics has been provided by Herbert Kitschelt, who has argued that the concept of New Politics is too vague, preferring the term left-libertarian as a more accurate description of the outlook of the green parties. As regards the two components of this definition, Kitschelt sees the green parties as left because they reject the idea that market mechanisms can provide solutions to issues of social justice, whilst accepting socialist concepts of equality and solidarity. He considers them to be libertarian because they reject hierarchical institutions, the bureaucratisation of the welfare state, and central planning, in favour of autonomy and participation. So whilst markets are seen as undermining social communities and threatening collective goods such as the environment, at the same time, the green parties extend their critique to encompass economic growth and bureaucracy, which means they also oppose the productivism of the left and centralised forms of control based on impersonal rules and expert systems.[55]

As part of a comparative survey, Kitschelt identifies a number of structural factors as indicators favourable to the emergence of left-libertarian parties, including high average incomes, an extensive welfare state, corporatist labour organisations, socialist governments, and an active anti-nuclear movement. He admits that these factors

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54 F. Müller-Rommel and T. Poguntke, 'The Unharmonious Family: Green Parties in Western Europe', in E. Kolinsky (ed.), The Greens in West Germany: Organisation and Policy Making, Oxford, New York, and Munich, Berg, 1989, pp. 11-29.
55 H. Kitschelt, The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Politics in Belgium and West Germany, Ithica and London, Cornell University Press, 1989.

cannot fully explain variations in the relative strength of left-libertarian parties, but in order to provide a cut-off point he does not include those parties which have failed to gain four per cent of the vote in a national election. On these grounds, following Müller-Rommel's classification between radical and moderate parties, he excludes the British Green Party because they do not 'embrace a comprehensive left-liberal agenda'.[56] Certainly the emergence of the British Green Party is not wholly explicable in terms of Kitschelt's criteria so it is convenient for him to exclude them, yet it can be argued that in terms of organisation, strategy, policy, and ideology, they are no less left-libertarian than parties he does include. Also following their receipt of a fifteen per cent of the vote in the 1989 European elections, the highest national vote ever achieved by any green party, they easily surpass his electoral threshold.

Another characteristic of left-libertarian parties identified by Kitschelt is that rather than following the logic of party competition as pursued by most conventional political parties, they follow a logic of constituency representation, which means that organisation, strategy, and policy are derived from the ideology of their core supporters. His research on green party activists in Belgium and West Germany has led him to conclude that the majority of national party activists are ideological in outlook, aiming at long term policies rather than piecemeal reforms. They also seek to create organisational forms of solidarity incorporating a microcosm of the society they hope to bring into being, whilst resisting attempts to reform party structures in the interests of electoral efficiency. On strategy they reject alliances with other parties and support involvement in extra-parliamentary direct action. However, Kitschelt

56 Ibid., p. 13.

notes that not all the activists could be described as ideologues. He identifies a second group he names lobbyists whose main focus is on active campaigning and building links with interest groups outside the party. He also recognises a third group, the pragmatists, who support gradual reform as a path to long-term change, and who seek a restructuring of party organisation to increase electoral effectiveness, as well as supporting alliances with other parties. Kitschelt observes that the balance of power between these groups depends on structural conditions affecting the mobilisation of support for the party concerned, the openness of political institutions, and its position in relation to competing parties.

Such an analysis could be applied to the Green Party given that a majority of the national activists might be described as ideologues, with smaller numbers of lobbyists and pragmatists. It was only when structural conditions changed in the late 1980s with environmental issues attaining a high public profile, becoming an issue of contention between the main political parties, that the Green Party achieved comparative success in the 1989 European elections. The influx of new members without a strong ideological commitment and the prospect of building on their recent electoral success enabled the pragmatists to reform the Party, but by then conditions had changed again as the environment ceased to be a factor central to political competition. The internal conflict produced by instituting reforms contributed to a reduction in support, allowing the ideologues to regain ascendance, though it also provided an opportunity for the lobbyists to put forward a campaigning strategy as an additional approach. Thus on one level Kitschelt's categories are quite plausible, though it should be remembered that they are ideal types, and that in practice most activists would be likely to combine

elements of all three outlooks to a greater or lesser degree. As it has already been suggested, whilst disagreements do tend to occur in the national Party over issues of organisation, strategy, and policy, this does not necessarily result in fixed factional positions but rather in shifting alliances on each issue, whilst the majority of members do not involve themselves in such disputes. Where a consideration of the outlook of the Green Party indicates a possible divergence from the view offered by Kitschelt concerns the question of the extent to which activists share a common ideology.

In similar terms to Offe's argument that the greens do not possess a common analysis of society or a shared utopia, Kitschelt contends that left-libertarian parties are characterised by a negative consensus, presumably in that they are united by what they oppose, rather than a unified ideology aimed towards a collective goal. Hence he believes that not only do they disagree about causes and solutions to problems, but they are also highly suspicious of the notion of a unified ideology. This results in an ideologically pluralist position in which they draw upon socialist, liberal, anarchist, humanist, and utilitarian arguments respectively, depending on the particular case being made, but like Mellor, Kitschelt notes that this can result in ambiguities as in conflicts between socialist notions of objective needs and liberal notions of individual autonomy. This leads to his argument that because they have no comprehensive ideology, left-libertarian party programmes are disjointed, yet elsewhere he acknowledges the common elements within green party programmes.[57] At the same time Kitschelt recognises that the green parties do represent overriding values of equality, social justice, participation, solidarity, consensus, tolerance, autonomy, and ecological harmony,

57 Kitschelt makes both arguments in ibid., Chapter 3.

but he believes that in challenging both the market and central planning, they have not developed a sufficiently clear vision of the institutions able to implement these values.

Thus Kitschelt's discussion of these issues contains an apparent contradiction. This partly results from his conviction that because the practice of the green parties does not directly reflect the political discourse of those involved, due to unintended consequences or 'perverse effects', it is better to concentrate on studying organisation and strategy in relation to structural influences.[58] Yet his initial hypothesis is seemingly based on the assumption that ideology is an important factor, for in arguing that this new outlook is based on a logic of representation, this implies that the core beliefs of those involved was at least the initial factor in shaping the organisation, strategy, and policy of the new green parties. Whilst it may well be that in putting these beliefs into practice 'perverse effects' have occurred which work against the conscious intentions of those involved, this does not necessarily support his contention that the green parties lack a unified ideology. Indeed Kitschelt's whole concept of left-libertarian parties indicates a recognition that this involves a new ideological stance which rejects aspects of the existing political consensus in order to seek an alternative. Also relevant in this context is his observation, made in conjunction with Staf Hellemans, that whilst green party activists tend to argue that they are beyond left and right, they are overwhelmingly anti-capitalist, favour intervention in the economy, and support redistribution of income. This leads to their argument that what is being adopted is an ideologically pluralist position in which

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58 The concept of 'perverse effects' is derived from the work of R. Boudon. See Kitschelt's discussion of this in ibid., Chapter 3.

traditional as well as new definitions of left politics co-exist within contemporary green discourse.[59] As it will be seen from the examination of the beliefs of Green Party activists in Chapters 4 and 5, though they are united in opposition to a number of factors, they also can be shown to represent a recognisable worldview which is not merely negative, and which does include an analysis of society and a vision of the future they would like to create. The extent to which this draws on existing political philosophies or constitutes an entirely new perspective will be considered in Chapter 6.

Relatively few studies of green ideology have referred to the outlook of the Ecology/Green Party in Britain. Apart from the discussion provided by Lowe and Worboys mentioned in Chapter 1, to date only one published account of green ideology has considered the topic in terms of the beliefs and practices of Green Party members. This was provided by Bennie, Franklin, and Rüdig, based on an analysis of the second Strathclyde survey of Green Party members undertaken in 1991.[60] This study sought to bridge the gap between existing academic portrayals of green political theory and the stated beliefs of those actively involved in green politics as revealed by empirical research. The Strathclyde team were particularly interested in possible ideological differences between Green Party members. Their survey consisted of a questionnaire, part of which contained statements on green philosophy, policy and strategy with which respondents were asked to agree or disagree. The responses were

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59 H. Kitschelt and S. Hellemans, 'The Left-Right Semantics and the New Politics Cleavage', Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1990, pp. 210-238.
60 L. Bennie, M. Franklin and W. Rüdig, 'Green Dimensions: The Ideology of the British Greens', in W. Rüdig (ed.), Green Politics Three, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 217-239.

then subjected to factor analysis in an attempt to identify clusters of variables indicative of possible ideological differences.

However, there are limitations in using this kind of survey to uncover deeply held beliefs. Since they were to be converted into quantifiable data the questions were closed rather than open, and phrased in a rather simple form. Also the topics on which the questions were based reflected the existing academic literature, something which tended to limit responses to a set of preconceived categories. For example, with their questions on philosophy the researchers read agreement with the notion of there being an intrinsic value in nature as a belief in deep ecology. Similarly, affirming the importance of action taken at an individual level was interpreted as implying support for lifestyle approaches and New Age beliefs, whilst a belief in the importance of a just and egalitarian society was equated with an ecosocialist perspective, and so on. Thus it could be said that the researchers sought to read too much into the responses given, as the answers to such simply phrased questions cannot be interpreted so unambiguously.

As a result of their factor analysis, Bennie et al. identified three main groupings within the Party. The first of these they described as the left/anarchists who were seen as emphasising the importance of social issues, decentralisation, and opposition to the notion of having a party leader. The second group were described as deep ecologists, being biocentric in outlook, having survivalist tendencies, and favouring grassroots or individual action, being neither leftist nor electoralist. The third group identified were the electoralists who wished to improve the Party's media image, formulate more detailed policies and elect a single leader. This group also tended towards biocentricism and were anti-leftist in outlook though

they rejected notions of survivalism. In conclusion Bennie et al. argued that the existence of these ideological divisions did not necessarily threaten the future of the Party, for though there were considerable disagreements regarding strategy, there were also large areas of consensus, especially in the realms of philosophy and policy. Nevertheless, they contend that given the identification of these three distinct sub-groups, green ideology cannot be seen as a coherent world-view.

Bennie et al.'s reliance on factor analysis to draw such conclusions is not without its problems. Apart from the reservations already expressed about the reliability of their initial data, whilst it is possible to use factor analysis to identify clusters of variables loading on selected factors, it is difficult to establish what meaning can be attached to such groupings. There is a danger that the whole process can become tautologous, leading to findings that reflect the researchers' categorisation of the data.[61] Given the weaknesses of factor analysis it is perhaps surprising that Bennie et al. did not seek to check their findings against other forms of investigation such as in-depth interviews or observation of what respondents actually did in practice. The method adopted by Bennie et al. meant that they were unable to explore the complexities of disagreements within the Party or establish whether there was indeed an ideological basis underlying them. Though differences undoubtedly exist over issues of organisation, strategy and policy, in highlighting these it is easy to overlook the extent of a broad consensus regarding core values. Thus Bennie et al.'s conclusion that because sub-groups operate

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61 For a critique of factor analysis see, E. Babbie, The Practice of Social Research (fifth edition), Belmont California, Wadsworth, 1989, pp. 450-453.

within it, the Green Party cannot be said to have a cohesive ideology, cannot be substantiated on the basis of the evidence provided.

That said the three groupings identified by Bennie et al. have some plausibility in that they are similar to recognisable positions which have emerged within the Party over time. These categories also roughly correspond to the main accounts of green politics already published in book form by Party members. Jonathon Porritt's *Seeing Green* and Sara Parkin's *Green Parties* could be seen as representing a pragmatic environmentalism which sought to combine an orthodox electoral approach with increased executive control of the party, as demonstrated by their support for the Green 2000 initiative. Though Porritt and Parkin are no longer active within the Party, others who broadly agree with this stance remain committed members. Derek Wall's *Getting There* and *A Green Manifesto for the 1990s*, co-written with Penny Kemp, advocate an ecosocialist and decentralist position which favours electoral and non-electoral strategies. Both vociferous opponents of the Green 2000 reforms, they had previously been involved in the Association of Socialist Greens. Though this group no longer exists, Wall and Kemp have continued to be active in Party affairs. A third group could be seen as being represented by Sandy Irvine and Alex Ponton whose *A Green Manifesto* could be seen as incorporating deep ecological and survivalist viewpoints. Irvine and Ponton, who believed that the Party should concentrate primarily on environmental issues rather than social concerns, were also strongly identified with Green 2000, and following its perceived failure left the Green Party to set up a rival organisation called ECO: The Campaign for Political Ecology. This group has remained small and has yet to decide whether it intends to become a separate political party. A few supporters of this position have remained

within the Green Party where they are largely associated with the Population Working Group or a fringe group called the Campaign for Real Ecology, though their influence remains negligible.[62]

Nevertheless, these three perspectives only represent general trends and cannot be seen as indicative of sustained organised factional activity. Throughout the Party's history many groups have emerged in response to differences over particular issues, though most of these tend to be comparatively short-lived with past disagreements being forgotten as new issues arise. The Green 2000 dispute led to considerable polarisation which all but tore the Party apart, but a few years on many who were on opposing sides can be seen working together. It should also be noted that as well as there being considerable differences within these groupings, there is far more crossover between them than Bennie et al. and other researchers have acknowledged, with people who disagree on one issue agreeing on another. It must further be restated that those Party members involved in any kind of factional activity have always been relatively few in number. Indeed any attempt to organise factions within the Party tend to be regarded with suspicion by most Party members, though there is also a high level of tolerance which allows the expression of different viewpoints. As with any party there are continual disagreements on the fine detail, but there is also an underlying acceptance of the Green Party's basic stance.

When it comes to uncovering core beliefs and values it is not always immediately apparent what these consist of, as these receive little explicit discussion in Green Party documents. Some indications

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62 J. Porritt, Seeing Green, op. cit.; S. Parkin, Green Parties, op. cit.; D. Wall, Getting There, London, Green Print, 1990; P. Kemp and D. Wall, A Green Manifesto for the 1990s, London, Penguin, 1991; S. Irvine and A. Ponton, A Green Manifesto, London, Optima, 1989.

can be found in a section of the *MfSS* called the Philosophical Basis, which is the only statement that all Party members are expected to endorse. This includes a critique of the consequences of economic growth and an outline of the kind of sustainable society that the Party would like to create through conserving resources in order to maintain an ecological equilibrium. There follows a description of the main principles by which such a society would operate including decentralisation, world-wide democratic co-ordination, basic material security for all, small-scale industry co-owned by the workforce and the community, production based on need, satisfying work providing high quality and durable products, an increase in leisure time, and an emphasis on personal fulfilment in material and non-material terms. From a reading of this, as well as other manifestos and statements of principle, it is possible to extrapolate a number of core values embodied in words which constantly recur such as sustainability, survival, equilibrium, balance, social justice, equality, participatory democracy, empowerment, co-operation, community, personal autonomy, self-reliance, responsibility, tolerance, diversity, non-violence, and quality of life. Set against these are a number of negative values to be opposed, including growth (in terms of more or bigger is better), greed, materialism, competition, aggression, conflict, exploitation, hierarchy, and intolerance. As it has been seen, the Party has attempted to incorporate the positive values and reject the negative values in its policy and its practice.[63]

Of course it is easy to espouse such lofty principles in the form of a list of words meant to encapsulate certain qualities. What

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63 See MfSS, 1975, op. cit., Philosophical Basis (PB). See also: The Green Party General Election Manifesto, London, the Green Party, 1987; and 'The Politics of Ecology: an Alternative Vision for the Eighties', Econews, No. 7, March 1980, pp. 9-11.

is less clear is what Green Party members understand them to mean and how they see these ideals as coming together as part of a unified worldview. Many combinations of these principles could be seen as potentially contradictory, yet the complexities involved are rarely explained. In fact the whole issue of what constitutes green politics has hardly been discussed at all in Party publications. These tend to be almost exclusively concerned with practical operation of the Party, developing policies, contesting elections and providing news of current events. Thus material produced by the Green Party provides an incomplete picture of the outlook of its members. Many core beliefs seem to be taken for granted, as though it is so obvious what the Party stands for that such matters do not require explanation.

Along with the practical orientation of Party publications, another factor which can be related to this is a resistance to the whole notion of ideology that exists amongst a sizeable proportion of Party members. This view is encapsulated by one of its main proponents, Jonathon Porritt, when he states that:

> .... there is no God-given requirement which says a political party has to base its activities on a fixed ideology. Having written the last two general election manifestos for the Ecology Party, I would be hard put even now to say what our ideology is.[64]

Porritt is being slightly disingenuous here since a large proportion of his work, including material written whilst he was active in the Ecology Party, has been dedicated to clarifying what green politics consists of to a popular audience. His real objection is to the ideologies of left and right which he sees as sharing many assumptions concerning the benefits of economic growth, progress,

64 J. Porritt, Seeing Green, op. cit., p. 9.

industrialism, technology and mass consumption. Since he sees existing dominant ideologies as part of the problem, Porritt wants to show that green politics is neither of the left, nor the right, nor of the centre, but something entirely different. At the same time he seeks to avoid defining green politics as a new ideology since he believes that this would be both reductionist and divisive.[65]

In this Porritt is articulating a trend which can be found in Party documents since the earliest manifestos. As well as wishing to transcend political categories of left and right, there has also been an apparent reluctance to define exactly what the Party does stand for. In part this may have been for tactical reasons for whilst the Party can be seen as taking positions that could be described as left on a number of issues, there is a perception that many potential green voters are people who might otherwise vote Conservative. Thus the Party has tended to avoid taking an overt leftist stance to retain a universal appeal. However, tendencies aimed towards avoiding a clear definition of the location of green politics seem to go deeper than this. It is as though those committed to green politics do not want to be constricted by existing categories, but rather to create a new and different way of living. This creates problems for the Party in that within the current conventional language of politics, the conception that alternative ways of organising society exist at all is a difficult one to communicate.

It is only recently that the Party has begun to realise that it needs to clarify its message in a way that the general public will be able to find understandable. Another response has been a deliberate attempt to discuss these issues in the form of a programme of political education for its own members. Thus in the past few years

65 J. Porritt, Seeing Green, op. cit., especially p. 44 and pp. 199-200.

Party publications have carried articles and debates on the nature of green politics, looking at it in terms of social ecology and deep ecology, whether green politics has a class dimension, and whether it represents a politics of the left or goes beyond left and right. Paradoxically, the terms of reference of such debates are often drawn from theoretical portrayals of green politics. Though in the course of this dialogue some Party activists have shown themselves to be remarkably well-read in this area, others demonstrate a mistrust of academic theory, preferring to rely on their own knowledge and experience. This raises questions concerning the issue of reflexivity, relating to how green ideology is defined and who defines it. Whereas most such definitions of green politics seem to be derived from theoretical accounts, it can be seen that these have failed to fully come to terms with the outlook and political practice of those actively involved.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a description of the Green Party in terms of its historical development, membership, organisation, strategy, policy and ideology, drawing on academic accounts, Party documents, and publications by Party members. From this it can be shown that the Green Party was one of the first groups to organise itself politically around a package of issues that later came to be accepted as a specifically green political agenda. Though this outlook initially focused on the perception that an ecological crisis threatened the long-term survival of humanity, other species, and the planet, it combined this with other concerns such as those of democratic

participation, social justice, work, leisure, and the quality of life, in order to radically question the organisation, reproduction, and objectives of modern industrial society.

This set of concerns was strongly, though not exclusively, associated with a distinct social group who in turn were responding to a set of structural conditions with a critique that was both cultural and economic. In order to bring about the long-term goal of the complete transformation of society it was seen as necessary to create a new and separate political party. This was because all existing parties were not only failing to address these concerns, but were regarded as exacerbating the problems that gave rise to them, through their common commitment to economic growth as the principal indicator of social well-being. Though in many ways conforming to the structural forms governing the activities of any political party, the Green Party has sought to innovate by incorporating a number of its core principles within its organisational and strategic practices. It has also formulated a set of policies which, though subject to modification over time, has nevertheless remained consistent with its original concerns. Though the Party has remained comparatively small and failed to achieve significant electoral success, it has managed to survive and maintain a degree of support and influence. Thus by any definition the Green Party can be seen as representing a distinctive green political practice.

Studies of the Green Party have provided some useful analyses, especially regarding the structural position of the Party, its organisation, and membership. There has though been a tendency to concentrate on conflict within the Party, with particular emphasis being given to the Green 2000 debate which was occurring during the period when most recent studies were being undertaken. It could be

argued that such conflicts have been over-emphasised. Though differences undoubtedly exist concerning policy, organisation, and strategy, it is not clear that such conflicts, when they occur, are ideological. Sometimes it is possible that they may be, as in the case where a group actually splits away from the Party to set up a rival organisation, like the Campaign for Political Ecology. Mostly they are not since there seems to be a large degree of consensus within the Party regarding its ultimate goals and the assumption of shared common beliefs. However, detailed knowledge concerning these beliefs and the values that underlie them remains minimal. Members seem to largely take such beliefs for granted, whilst the practical orientation of Party publications means that these matters receive little discussion. Thus it can be seen that whilst these sources provide a great deal of information concerning the public face of the Green Party, a number of questions remain unanswered concerning what party members actually believe, to what extent their beliefs are shared, and how their beliefs relate to their practice. In order to further explore these questions Chapter 4 will adopt an alternative approach by means of an investigation based on the accounts provided by Green Party activists during a series of in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER 4

THE WORLDVIEW OF GREEN PARTY ACTIVISTS

Introduction

Following the preceding investigation of the Green Party as revealed by documentary sources, the published accounts of prominent members, and through available empirical studies, this Chapter considers the question of what constitutes a green ideology through the accounts of active members of the Green Party drawn from in-depth interviews. The interview material on which this examination is based was extremely rich. Rather than attempting to address the full range of issues which emerged, for the purposes of this study particular emphasis will be given to those parts of the material which can be directly related to the interviewees' understanding of the content and meaning of green politics. After a brief description of the social characteristics of the interviewees, the main part of the Chapter consists of a presentation of the worldview of Green Party activists organised into five general categories: ecology and economics; equity and social justice; political alternatives; ethical basis and values; and lifestyle. The objective is to construct an account of what a green ideology consists of according to those actively involved in green politics, which can then, in the following Chapter, be contrasted with portrayals of the topic in the theoretical literature.

Social Characteristics of Interviewees

As stated in Chapter 2, the interviewees included sixteen men and sixteen women, half of whom lived in large urban areas, with the rest being distributed between small towns, suburban or rural areas. A majority (twenty two) were between thirty and forty nine years of age, with only six being over fifty, and four less than thirty. Regarding social background, most had come from families that could be described as middle class in terms of parental occupation, with over half of their fathers having been employed in the managerial or professional sectors, whilst those of their mothers in paid work were for the most part employed in the clerical or retail sector.[1] Most of the remaining parents could be described as skilled working class. Few parents had been politically active themselves. Of those interviewees that had knowledge of their parents' past political views, more than half described them as having been Conservative voters, with just under a half either Labour or Liberal voters. A few could be classified as floating voters, whilst a small proportion were reported as being non-political or non-voting. About a quarter of interviewees declared that their parents had become Green voters (which is comparable to the number voting either Liberal or Labour), which could be attributed to the influence of their children's' activism, though the possibility exists that these parents were already sympathetic to concerns which were to become a part of green politics, or even predisposed their children to develop such sensibilities. Another factor which emerged relating to family background was that a small number (six) came from families in which

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1 It is not possible to give details of parental education as less than half of the interviewees were able to provide information on this.

one or both parents were immigrants to Britain, mostly from Germany, Scandinavia or the Baltic states. Only in one case had the parents come from a non-European ethnic background.

As regards education, more than a third of the interviewees attended a secondary modern or comprehensive school, with a similar number going to grammar school. Three went to Catholic schools and seven to private schools, mostly as boarders. Twenty five went on to do degree courses at a Polytechnic or University. Only four have no educational qualifications (though two of these are studying with the Open University), one was educated to O' level standard and three as far as A' level. Twenty five have degrees, and six of these also have a Masters degree or Doctorate (with a further four in progress). This high level of educational attainment is not fully reflected in the interviewees' choice of occupation. Five (four women, one man) could be described as professionals, working as teachers, civil servants or in social services. A further four (one woman, three men) could be placed in the technical and managerial sector, mostly working in computing, with another four (one woman, three men) classified as clerical, skilled and semi-skilled. Others work part-time, two (men) at a professional or technical level, two (one woman, one man) in the clerical or retail sectors, and two (one woman, one man) run their own small business. Of those not in paid work, six (three women, three men) are unemployed, one (woman) is supported by her partner, three (two women, one man) are full-time students, and three (two women, one man) are retired after having formerly worked in the public sector. Contrary to what might be expected no significant gender differential is apparent, in these figures.

Thus only thirteen (six women, seven men) have a conventional full-time job, and of these only four (one woman, three men) work in

private industry. This means that the majority can be classified as part of the 'non-productive' or decommodified sector of the economy. Overwhelmingly this seems to be a matter of personal preference, either because they see their jobs as socially useful, or because they wish to have the flexibility to concentrate on activities which they see as more important than paid work. For example the six unemployed were actually all working more or less full-time for the Green Party or other political, voluntary and environmental causes, as were many of the part-timers. This is in line with a general questioning of the purpose and importance of conventional work which is contained within the Green Party's programme, and perhaps also reflects attitudes drawn from the alternative counter culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Perhaps unsurprisingly given their age structure, more than half of the interviewees referred to feeling a part of this movement in some way or made it obvious that it had a significant impact on their beliefs and lifestyle.[2] Only about a quarter of respondents showed no indication of such influences despite having a similar social profile in other respects.

Most of the interviewees were long-standing members of the Green Party. Only four had been members for less than five years, ten for between five and nine years, eleven between ten and fourteen years, and seven between fifteen and twenty years. All of them had held some kind of office in their local party or stood as local candidates. One had been elected as a Green local councillor and one was serving on a parish council. Two thirds of them had attended a

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2 This can be contrasted with Rüdig et al.'s rather narrow definition of counter-cultural involvement in terms of association with New Left causes in that eleven per cent of their sample described themselves as activists of the student movement in the 1960s and ten per cent were involved in the anti-Viet-Nam war protests. See, W. Rüdig et al., Green Party Members: A Profile, op. cit., p. 36.

Green Party Conference, whilst half had been national officers of the Party and half had stood as candidates in general elections.

Regarding past political affiliation, seven interviewees described themselves as former Labour voters, whilst six voted Liberal (plus one Liberal Democrat), and four Conservative. Only three reported having been active members, one in each of the three main parties. The rest had not been involved in party politics before joining the Ecology/Green Party, but many had been involved in single issue campaigns. About half had been members of CND and a third members of Friends of the Earth. Other campaigns commonly mentioned included the women's movement, the Greenham Common and Molesworth peace camps, opposing nuclear power, the Poll Tax, Third World issues, anti-racism, human rights, animal rights and local environmental campaigns. Only four interviewees declared no such involvement. This contradicts Steven Yearley's assertion that the Green Party has only a limited overlap with other environmental and social movements. He bases this view on a statement to that effect made by Rüdig et al., yet by their own figures they found that more than half of all Green Party members had belonged to Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, and forty per cent to CND. In terms of current activity Rüdig et al. state that about forty per cent describe themselves as active in the environmental movement (compared with only thirty seven per cent who said they were active in the Green Party), thirty per cent in the peace movement, twenty per cent in the anti-nuclear power movement, seventeen per cent in animal rights groups, fourteen per cent involved in trade union activities and thirteen per cent in the feminist movement. Thus at least some

involvement in environmental and other social movements is maintained at the same time as membership of the Green Party.[3]

Though the sample of interviewees is obviously too small to be statistically significant, some general trends can be seen to emerge when they are compared with the survey by Rüdig et al. It can be seen that the interviewees are similar in terms of age, level of education, and past political involvement to the profile of the membership given by Rüdig et al.[4] The most obvious ways in which these activists differ from Rüdig et al.'s sample are in relation to their duration of membership, and in terms of the relatively small number in full-time paid employment. Given their high level of educational attainment the interviewees could be seen as under-achievers in occupational terms. However, this seems to result from a set of priorities in which conventional full-time employment is not seen as of prime importance, with other criteria such as personal fulfilment and flexibility of time having preference, especially for those who wish to dedicate themselves to activities relating to their political commitment. It may be that in a few cases those pursuing such a course were able to afford to do so because they had an alternative source of income, this was not true of the majority who seem to have actively chosen a reduced standard of living in material terms. This could be seen as part of a rejection of the dominant economic values of society which is central to green politics. It is only to be expected that those who most identify with green politics would seek to integrate their beliefs with their lifestyle and practice, which could explain this discrepancy between the activists and Rüdig

3 See, S. Yearley, 'Social Movements and Environmental Change', in M. Redclift and T. Benton, Social Theory and the Global Environment, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 161; and Rüdig et al., Green Party Members: A Profile, op. cit., pp. 33-38.
4 Rüdig et al., ibid., pp. 16-39.

et al.'s survey of the membership as a whole. In order to further explore such connections between belief and practice, it will be necessary to examine what these activists understand green politics to consist of.

The Content of Green Ideology

What follows is a construction of an overall picture of what constitutes a green ideology abstracted from the accounts provided by Green Party activists. Whilst this represents my own selection, interpretation, and systemisation of the interview material, the intention has been to reflect the emphasis given by the activists themselves to the different areas discussed. In order to assist this process, the material has been presented in the interviewees' own words as much as possible, though I have edited the selected quotes from the transcripts to avoid repetition and clarify what I understood the respondents were seeking to convey. Omissions are indicated by a series of dots, whilst any changes, whether of sentence structure, or words added to provide context (usually taken from elsewhere in the interview) are indicated by square brackets. The activists' accounts are interspersed with a commentary which seeks to identify the main themes which emerged, to explore their understanding of the different aspects of green politics under consideration, and highlight the similarities and differences in the outlook of the interviewees.

I: Ecology and Economics

It might be surmised that environmental or ecological factors provide the core principles on which a green ideology is based, yet during the course of the interviews just under a third of the activists placed a major emphasis on this aspect of their outlook. Those interviewees who did focus on this issue tended to so in the following terms:

> I think there is a green political programme which is distinct, because it emphasises the fact that we have to respect nature.[5]

> The basis of it is the future of the Earth, because that is what we all depend on. And therefore that has to be the crux point of your politics and even though my main interests are around the politics of social issues .... If there is anything distinctive about where the greens belong, it is actually seeing the relationship with the planet as being much more of a partnership .... living with rather than living off the planet.[6]

Such statements indicate that the focus of green politics extends far beyond the immediate environment to encompass concerns over the relationship between society and nature at a global level.

Others conceptualise this dimension of green politics in terms of adopting aspects of an ecological analysis:

> [O]ur unique contribution to politics is that our party is founded on ecological principles .... because its a circular thing and not a linear one .... [A]ll the other parties' politics is a maximise what goes in at one end and maximise what comes out the other end, leaving the ninety five per cent of what comes out the other end as crap; either as crap because people don't need it or because it's actually the pollution .... [I]t's all in one end and out the other, which isn't going to work on a finite planet where you need to keep cycling the resources .... [T]he Green Party worldview is that things are cyclical,

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5 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.
6 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

> you need to recycle with your human waste, put it on the land, not in the sea .... Resources should be recycled, you minimise your energy usage, you try to use energy supplies that are benign to the environment.[7]

However, it soon becomes apparent that underlying such accounts is an alternative economic analysis. What is distinctive about this aspect of green politics is the relationship it draws between ecology and economics.

The Critique of Economic Growth and the Quality of Life

In searching for the causes rather than the symptoms of environmental and other problems facing modern societies it is the almost universally shared assumption of the desirability of economic growth, the notion that more is better, that green politics seeks to bring into question:

> There is a need for a political party that is saying economic growth is not sustainable, cannot, is not going to work, long-term is compromising our future, compromising the options of even our own generation. There are alternatives, there are different ways of measuring wealth, there is a different value system that is equally fulfilling and not as destructive .... [T]here are differences in the Party about how much you emphasise .... economic growth because it is an imprecise thing. I mean we don't want no economic growth. Unfortunately in the age of the T.V. set you don't get time to put in all the caveats. I personally don't have a problem with them coming on saying the Green Party is anti-growth, because at least it gets the debate going and shows there is a different view .... What I'm against is .... net growth. You can have growth .... in whatever sense you want to define it, as long as you have a retraction somewhere else .... [T]he Green Party wants to see investment in certain things, growth in certain areas of the economy, repair, recycling, re-use, energy conservation, but it wants to cut back in other things, like road building.[8]

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7 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
8 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

The main point made by such accounts is that conventional conceptions of economic growth are ultimately unsustainable, hence the need to adopt alternative perspectives.

The issue of long-term sustainability and the limitations of existing economic approaches is often supplemented by a critique of economic growth as a measure of well being or the quality of life:

> [T]he concept of growth as an indicator of the well-being of society is fundamentally misconceived because it looks at the competitive production of materials, much of which are not necessary .... Taking into account the ecology in terms of people and the environment, has got to approach politics from that more holistic point of view that everything has consequences .... and that responsibility must be taken for them .... Economics is a large part of the problem with contemporary politics. Contemporary politics is simply driven by economic considerations. They are not driven by considerations for the general well-being of the people, they are not driven by considerations for the well-being of the environment. And the crucial thing I think is that the well-being of the people and the well-being of the environment are two sides of the same coin, they are interconnected, they are not [separate]. If you do divide them I think you end up down the road on which we appear to be set at the moment.[9]

> [T]he whole worry seems to be about gaining wealth rather than gaining quality of life .... You should be looking at quality of life rather than putting numerical values on it .... Nobody else seems to worry about what economics is for. They just accept that there is economics and one has to obey it .... [Green politics asks] what do we actually need from life, to get a full life, and looking beyond mere money at how to get it because money won't buy all your needs.[10]

> What all the other political parties are offering is different ways of managing industrial capitalism .... with everybody saying - what we need to do to make us all happy and contented - we will have even more industrial capitalism which will make more things and we will all be happier - which is clearly not happening .... [I]t's been a failure in terms both of meeting human needs and providing human happiness. I suppose effectively we are

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9 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
10 Interview with male national activist, 23.8.94.

> looking at sustainability and we are looking at quality of life as well.[11]

From the activists' perspective alternative economic indicators of well-being, which include social and environmental factors, are necessary. This also relates to the whole issue of the quality of life, the suggestion being that conventional politics, in pursuing goals relating to the expansion of the economy, has lost sight of what would actually improve people's lives. The activists often presented this in terms of phrases such as, 'quality is better than quantity', or, 'people are more important than money and things'.

Around half of the activists placed an emphasis on the importance of this aspect of the notion of the quality of life, as in statements such as:

> I never talk about economic growth when I'm giving public talks. I always talk about sustainable development, because economic growth as a concept implies that there is something that can be measured in a narrow way .... not that there aren't measurements .... which could be used to measure the quality of society .... but to say that there is one index that you can use to do it is wrong. I think sustainable development implies all kinds of things, many of which are not simply measuring things. Quality of life isn't necessarily a matter of economic measurement .... I see green politics as having the potential to make a society in which people's aspirations .... and the aspirations that they have for their children can be carried out in a reasonable way. That the quality of their lives, the way they relate to other people, and the overall environment in which they live, can be harmonised.[12]

> I think we are after a quality of life .... and if people could only perceive that if there were less road building there would be more countryside and would be less asthma and that sort of thing which follows from the pollution of cars. If we could work in that direction I think people could have a better quality of life. This is quite difficult to get over though when people want motorways to get them so quickly from A to B, and they

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11 Interview with male local activist, 26.7.94.
12 Interview with male local and national activist, 10.12.94.

> think that is what matters, but I don't think it is what matters.[13]

Thus the notion of the quality of life does not just relate to the measurement of indicators, but also concerns the idea that an alternative way of life is possible and desirable.

Holism, Balance, and Survival

Another area where ecological principles are seen as making a contribution is in terms of providing a holistic analysis, seeing how different factors link together, and how serious consequences can follow from too much emphasis in one area (such as the economy) and the neglect of others:

> Its about the way that everything is interrelated .... you can't just look at one thing in isolation because everything impacts on something else.[14]

> [E]verything is linked together .... and all these things have wider consequences .... you've got to have a holistic worldview .... its just the totality of it all, and the fact that there has got to be a broad based solution, and the whole thing is ultimately driven by economics, which should be driven by values. I mean it is, but no-one admits it. Its driven by; money is God and lets have more T.V. sets, but that isn't discussed, you know its just economic growth is good, end of story. If you challenge that you're a nutter, but its that sort of broad holistic view and that there has got to be a solution that takes everything into account.[15]

Used in this sense, holism provides the basis for a way of interpreting or analysing the world, that emphasises that everything is interrelated or interconnected, and draws attention to the unforeseen consequences which follow when the full range of

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13 Interview with female local activist, 5.9.94.
14 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
15 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

contributory factors are not brought into consideration on a given issue.

Along with the concept of holism, another word commonly used by activists was balance. This often implied the need to maintain a balance in an ecological sense, but was also used to suggest that all perspectives should be considered both in order to evaluate what is happening and to provide equitable and just solutions:

> Not only is it holistic in the sense that we are trying to put forward a blueprint where various elements of society, environmental protection, differences in world trade, social justice within our own society - how are these balanced so that you can have a sustainable society, so that the tread of humanity is a little bit lighter on the natural world. Not because we love the little pink bunnies, but because if you destroy the natural world there ain't anywhere else to go.[16]

As indicated by the statement above, in some accounts there is also a suggestion that ultimately the very survival of humanity and the global environment are at stake if action is not taken:

> [T]he thing of course is the fact that it is the understanding that nature and the Earth is something that we need to integrate into all the other analyses and actions around society, people. I mean without the Earth we're not going to bloody survive. I would say the Earth can survive without us.[17]

> One thing I think people are more interested in than accumulation at the moment is probably their survival, and the survival of future generations.[18]

As was seen in Chapter 3, the formation of a distinct green politics was strongly influenced by concerns over the threat to human and global survival, though amongst contemporary activists there was relatively little discussion of this. It may be that over time a shift

16 Interview with male national activist, 15.11.94.
17 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.
18 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

in attitude has taken place, as though some of the sense of urgency has dissipated with the perception in regard to their lack of immediate success, that their attempt to bring about change would have to be a long-term project. There was also an awareness that an emphasis on survival could be seen as seeking to evoke a fearful response, and that early attempts to do this had been counter-productive. It was also clear that for the interviewees mere survival was not enough, and that there were other principles to be considered, as illustrated by the statement, 'Its about survival, that is the basic thing, but its also about equality'.[19]

Sustainability and the Social Dimension

Hence rather than emphasising survival most activists preferred to concentrate on the need to build a sustainable society, involving the conservation of resources, the reduction of waste and pollution, and the minimisation of impact on the environment. In order for this to work, it was argued that such a future society must be socially as well as environmentally sustainable:

> I think for me .... its a method of problem solving .... which has within it a whole lot of choices. I mean the basic principles of it for me .... is the issue of sustainability, you know, what you are actually handing on. But strongly joined with that is the whole equity argument .... not just within a UK context, but a global context.[20]

> I believe then that the ecological imperative gives a different perspective because its holistic, you have none of this nonsense about externalities that you can ignore. I also believe that the need to preserve our ecology is a necessary condition of a sustainable society .... However, I don't believe that the requirement to have a sustainable society, and therefore one that is ecologically sustainable, is sufficient .... There have to be other things that you

19 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
20 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

> care about and are important to you, like equity and empowerment .... and I actually believe that if you don't have that it may be in theory ecologically sustainable, but in practice it won't be socially sustainable and it will collapse.[21]

Thus sustainability is seen as necessarily involving another set of principles relating to equity and social justice, not just in the context of British society, but at a global level.

II: Equity and Social Justice

For more than three quarters of the interviewees, equity and social justice were seen as essential features of green politics. Indeed many joined the Green Party precisely because of their concerns about social justice:

> I don't think I came to green politics from an environmental route. I think I probably came from a social route, which I think is very different .... I came to green politics because .... it was the one that actually believed in peace and justice for all the world's people. And within that comes the environment as well .... I also saw the Green Party as a social party concerned with social justice .... [E]cology without social justice is meaningless .... What is the point of actually ensuring that there is a better world just for a privileged few.[22]

> I'm not sure the environment brought me to the Green Party .... I was an ardent socialist and I've always believed in equality .... So justice, I've always been aware of the lack of it and my background I think has led me towards socialism .... So I was always a socialist and a great supporter of the Labour Party and probably the Militant Tendency if I'm to be honest, real lefty. But I saw the Labour Party just selling out .... I got to know the politics of the Green Party and realised that they were the only socialist party left in Britain .... And then the economic policies of the Green Party, the way they would like to change the whole system .... and then I do start to look at the pollution around us and the planet

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21 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
22 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

and how it all links in together .... I can even use that word holistic .... the Green Party's policies are holistic, but the other political parties aren't .... So it wasn't trees and green fields that brought me to the Green Party, it was socialism .... what keeps me going is the necessity for justice.[23]

I've always been concerned about connections, and that comes from starting off with quite a left-wing analysis, a Marxist analysis .... and seeing how economics fuels everything .... And I've always been concerned with other things apart from ecological matters .... I find it so hard to separate social injustices from other bad consequences of the way we live and the way we produce and consume .... I am not in green politics because I am primarily concerned about pollution, or because I am primarily concerned about species depletion, because I am concerned about other things as well.[24]

The statements above can be seen as representative of many in the Party who see green politics in terms of socialism.

Even those who displayed a marked antipathy to socialism, or identified the green politics as having made a distinct break with established political philosophies, shared similar concerns about social justice:

[T]o me specifically the social justice element is one of the most important things. I mean in a holistic sense you can't give priority to one thing without the other, but I just feel at the moment that is where the flash point is.[25]

Thus amongst the majority of activists the consensus was that it was impossible to separate social and environmental issues.

Green Politics and Social Exclusion: Poverty, Gender, and Ethnicity

Concepts of equity and social justice were seen as applicable in a number of categories, including those of poverty, gender, and

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23 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.
24 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
25 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

ethnicity. A large proportion of the activists emphasised the need to eliminate inequality as integral to protecting the environment:

> What is also out is drastic levels of inequality. I always talk in terms of equity because I believe its about giving people a fair chance .... I'm basically not in favour of large scale differentials between people and I think there is a point at which the size of differentials impairs the ability of society to hold together and to display its common interests. And I believe that green politics has a great interest in societies holding together because I don't believe that a bunch of unorganised individuals are going to be able to protect their ecology, because it only takes one individual to wreck it.[26]

> It is also important that people should not live some in extreme wealth and some in extreme poverty. I think that Green Party politics wants to level out people's incomes and their opportunities as well.[27]

Women activists in particular highlighted the need to recognise the contributions made to society by those whose work is not valued under the present economic system, most notably in terms of gender and domestic labour, as in:

> Having different sort of bases and principles upon which to develop what economics is, to develop the way that we use resources, the way that we value land, the way that we value labour. You don't just value factory hands, you also value currently unpaid caring work. Its the whole thing to do with what is work and what is valued, and crucial to that, is the divisions between the sexes and what is currently traditionally expected of each, and it seems that the capitalist system so far has been very interested in using what they can of labour when it suits them, but basically not doing too much to change general expectations of what man and woman are for and what their potential is .... [W]hat I'm working for which I see as green politics is for men, women and all other bits in between to be able to be seen to be and to work equally and to develop new structures and new approaches from that basis.[28]

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26 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
27 Interview with female local activist, 5.9.94.
28 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

> [T]he whole idea of balance within it too, in terms of balance between the sexes, that to me is important within green politics as well. Just to try and find a way that actually allows people to develop as themselves rather than be focused into things that you are supposed to do because of your gender.[29]

Many of the women interviewees commented on the relative lack of sexism within the Green Party.

Some of the men also mentioned that they too had become more aware of gender issues:

> [T]he experience of being in the Green Party has modified my attitudes on a number of things. Certainly I'm a lot more politically correct than I ever was before. I am much more conscious about the use of the language in terms of sexism in particular. Racism I was always aware of .... but sexism, although I was aware of it then, I was not as appreciative of the issues as I have been since being in the Green Party.[30]

Opposition to racism was another area singled out as integral to green politics:

> We have to oppose racism and all the things that go with it because it is inimical to an ecological, just, equitable society. We all live on one planet.[31]

Equity Between North and South

Such concerns over poverty and inequality, gender, and ethnicity, were not just seen as relating to social relations within British society. A further dimension was provided by those who saw these issues in international terms, with particular emphasis being given to the divide between the affluent developed countries of the North and the poorer developing countries of the South :

> I think it would be almost impossible to have a green society in isolation in relation to the rest of the world ....

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29 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
30 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
31 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

> Its an internationalist perspective, its not a narrow nationalist thing.[32]

> A lot of my work has been working with women .... with international solidarity, but linked that is to do with the whole anti-nuclear movement, military and civil, and understanding other peoples. And those cultures particularly are ones who have got a much more alive understanding tradition around the importance of land and natural resources and ways of actually organising themselves as human beings in some sort of society, community, and other cultural things to go with that .... You do have to work on an international level, because we are all so tied in internationally to do with [the] economy and [the] military, therefore we need to work internationally also for human liberation as well as Earth liberation.[33]

Thus green politics are seen to be global and that this necessarily involves social justice and self determination for all the world's peoples.

Intergenerational and Interspecies Dimensions of Equity and Justice

Such rights are also seen as extending to take account of the interests of future generations:

> Green politics for me is actually seeing a world where everybody has their basic rights, basic comforts, and we also preserve the environment in which we live for future generations .... [E]verybody on this planet has some basic human rights; rights to clean water, rights to a safe environment, rights to somewhere to call their home without interference .... Also I guess over the years, especially since I've had children, it seems far more vital to me, its important to actually provide a world that is safe for future generations. We have a responsibility to those that are not here yet.[34]

Others, whilst acknowledging these human centred aspects of social justice, also want to extend equivalent rights to the non-human world:

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32 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.
33 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.
34 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

> There are other strands to it .... ultimately again they are derived from ecological principles. I mean there is equity, rather than equality .... where everyone is given a free chance and a reasonable level of resources or access to resources. Where it differs from the other parties' formulation is that it [sees this in terms of]: equity within generations, between peoples - First World, Third World; between generations, because we've got a long-term view of the cyclical thing, you've got to keep the systems intact and going to support life and future generations; and between .... humans and the rest of life on the planet .... we depend on the rest of nature for our own survival, and if you keep chipping away the foundations and you'll come down with it eventually.[35]

> What it means to me is being concerned about justice in all its possible forms, and all the sites it might operate in, social justice and justice to other species.[36]

From the above statements it can be seen that concepts of equity and social justice are regarded as integral to green politics and not something that can be regarded as an optional extra. This is also revealed by the way that these concepts are interwoven with other elements of a green discourse, as can be further demonstrated when the political and ethical dimensions are considered.

III: Green Politics as a Political Alternative

Just as some activists saw themselves as being attracted to green politics because of their concern over social issues, others identified a search for an alternative form of politics as being a crucial factor:

> I came into it through my interest in politics and the political process rather than my interest in the environment .... I was actively interested in politics. I wanted to be actively involved in politics but there wasn't anything on offer so to speak in this country

35 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
36 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

which fulfilled what I wanted, none of them did. The Ecology Party came along and struck this chord and I could see all the connections between what I felt and social injustice. Quite important too the lack of emphasis on material things, the emphasis on, I won't say spiritual values, but on humanitarian values .... And from that then I began to understand where my own feelings lay, through reading what the Ecology Party was saying, and from then I developed an interest in green politics and environmental issues, but I very quickly accepted the Ecology Party's philosophy, it gelled with mine. It opened the way for me. I felt very quickly and still feel that it was my political and in a sense spiritual home .... [T]he reason the Ecology Party was saying something to me was that it brought in all the things I'd grown to feel strongly about; about inequality, about social injustice, about the emphasis on materialism, and the general direction in which we were going. And when I actually then started to look at green philosophy it seemed to me that I understood because of the holistic approach of green thinking, that I could see the interconnectedness of everything and all the problems of the world could be explained in environmental terms in its wider sense.[37]

Some activists even revealed a marked antipathy to politics, including the realities of green politics:

> I hate politics and hate politicians .... I don't have any time for politicians because their objectives are all wrong. They are not in the least bit interested in running the country properly. They won't listen to you. They are not interested in government. What they are interested in is power and public relations. They see public relations as a way to be in power .... I see that to some extent even in the Green Party .... Most people who are involved in politics are so blinkered and narrow minded. They are not interested in finding the right answers. They are interested in applying their view of the universe to everything that they see. And I think that is certainly true of Green Party people .... the national activists particularly .... they want the Green Party to go in a particular direction and they are not interested in anyone else's views. They obviously don't see it that way. They see it as, there are all these stupid people who are stopping us from doing the right thing. But if you look at it objectively what is happening is that nobody is prepared to listen to anybody else. They have a fixed mind set and they are saying I'm right and everybody else is wrong - and I think that is one of the reasons why the Green Party has not progressed.[38]

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37 Interview with male local activist, 1.9.94.
38 Interview with male local activist, 7.9.94.

However, despite such feelings this individual continued to be active at a local level. This wholesale condemnation of politics is perhaps unusual in its vehemence, but it does indicate aspects of an underlying critique of the conventional practice of politics which was present in a number of activist accounts. There was a sense in which the Green Party did constitute something of an 'anti-party party' in a similar sense to the way the term was used by Petra Kelly to describe the unconventional practices of *Die Grünen*.[39]

The activists commonly believed that green politics should ideally represent an alternative practice, though there was an awareness that the realities of political organisation made this difficult to achieve:

> We are brought up to accept militarism and violence in our social relations .... I mean the tactics of manipulation and control in our ordinary social dealings .... And conventional politicians practice these nasty little games all the time. Even in the Green Party you get obsessive control freaks who use tactics and rule books to control others. To me that is the opposite of what green is about .... so there is a contradiction sometimes between green and party, because parties do attract control freaks and all kinds of nasty games. I actually believe it's a compromise we have to make. We have to live in the real world, but it's not what green politics is really about.[40]

Though there was this recognition that any attempt to construct a new kind of politics was not going to be exempt from the problems that affect established forms of politics, there was a general acceptance that the Green Party had gone some way towards addressing these limitations in its structure, organisation and practice.

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39 P. Kelly, Fighting For Hope, op. cit., pp. 17-23.
40 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

Democracy, Participation, and Leadership

Even whilst expressing ambivalent feelings about becoming involved with politics, activists nevertheless saw that such an engagement was necessary in order to bring about change:

> I've always had a problem with getting involved in electoral politics. I mean to me this business of making decisions about what resources should be used, for what purposes, whose resources, how democratic are the decisions; all these things bring in the inequalities there are in this society and who has access to positions where decisions can be made, and for what purpose these decisions [are] made. It brings in science as well as other political power and also very much the whole thing of what economics is, the economy.[41]

> We have made an explicit commitment to decentralise power to a local level .... and increase levels of political participation in the process. We've always been very committed to the notion of participatory democracy.[42]

Electoral politics as currently constituted were generally regarded as not truly representative. Though accepting the need to participate in elections, most activists believed in encouraging participatory forms of democracy as an alternative.

Related to this was the attitude most activists had concerning the role of leaders:

> And again, things like leaders, you don't need them. What we need are people who feel confident and strong in themselves and that is something that green politics is about, but then again I think that relates to the word equality. Well we all feel confident and happy that we can make decisions and choices in life and when you've got a leader you don't need to. You just become sheep and you're just told what to do. And green politics doesn't do that, green politics encourages you, [it] can push you in the right direction, but doesn't lead you, doesn't dominate you, doesn't tell you what to do.[43]

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41 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.
42 Interview with male local and national activist, 10.12.94.
43 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.

> We can't have leaders .... I am strongly opposed to the idea of leaders. I don't think empowerment works with leaders, because to have leaders you must have followers, and instantly you have introduced a radical division. That for me is a key part of green politics. If this Party votes for a leader I have real problems about being in it.[44]

Such views about leaders were endorsed by a majority of activists.

A small group did hold the opinion that having a leader would act as a focus to help the media and electorate grasp green politics more easily. This was less because they actively wanted a leader, but more for the purposes of getting their message across.

Consensus, Co-operation, Self-Reliance, and Communal Values

Another dimension of the green political alternative related to the way decisions were agreed upon:

> In the Green Party we have always regarded taking a vote as being a failure. We always aim to reach decisions as in the Society of Friends, by a form of consensus, rather than voting, and the aim is to reach unanimity if we can.[45]

Though aware that this ideal of consensus could be difficult to achieve in practice, it was regarded as something to strive towards. For example during debates at meetings or conferences whenever consensual decisions did emerge this was invariably commented upon with approval by the chairperson.

Closely related to this was the idea that green politics should encourage co-operation:

> Green politics is about empowerment and establishing non-violent, communicating, co-operative structures.[46]

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44 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
45 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
46 Interview with male national activist, 23.7.94.

Again there was an acceptance that this might be easier said than done, especially when people held conflicting viewpoints or there were clashes of personality. Nevertheless, the expectation was that people should try and work together, and even when there were differences to respect these, yet still seek common ground.

Self-reliance was another concept which was frequently mentioned in this context:

> Green politics .... is trying to encourage people to be self-reliant and care for the world, as well as other people.[47]

This term has come to replace notions of self-sufficiency, and rather than being interpreted in an individualistic sense, is usually applied in a social context.

Green politics was also seen as embodying communal values:

> Green politics is about people taking responsibility for themselves, their communities, their neighbours.[48]

> [I]t is about the development of community, so it is looking at the way in which people relate very strongly to each other .... And it doesn't see it as just coming about through a system of regulation or you know, law. You are actually trying to change things about the way in which people feel about the area in which they live and the people with whom they interact, and indeed their responsibilities outside their own nation state too, and I think that is very strong within green politics and very different. There is this feeling of a wider responsibility, its not just our future, its a global thing.[49]

This idea of community, though rarely explicitly defined, did not seem to be envisaged as some kind of insular retreat from the world. Rather it was seen as offering local autonomy in a way that did not deny wider responsibilities. Self-reliance was taken to mean that

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47 Interview with female local activist, 12.12.94.
48 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
49 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

though levels of trade in materials and commodities would be greatly reduced, it was expected that communities would still be involved in communicative exchanges of knowledge and perhaps personnel. Since such communities would not be dependent on exploiting other parts of the world, they would thus contribute to creating a fairer society which would also have a greatly reduced impact on the environment.

Scale, Decentralisation, and the State

Another aspect of the green political alternative considers the scale on which society is organised:

> Its against everything that is dehumanising, depersonalising. Its against .... waste and exploitation, the homogeneity you get in life when its organised along .... industrialised principles. Where a huge centralised structure is just making maximum efficiency .... out of what should be a lot of very various people and communities and environments.[50]

Hence centralised large scale structures organised on bureaucratic or industrial principles are seen as repressive of human autonomy and diversity.

In order to counter such influences greens see a more devolved society as having more democratic potential:

> Its also very much about acting at a local level and trying to get away from the present model of top-down politics ..... because the more people do for themselves, the more confident they get, the more they are able to determine their own destinies.[51]

> Linked to [the policies] is the wider green values thing about empowerment, decentralisation, giving local communities more power.[52]

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50 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
51 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
52 Interview with male local and national activist, 10.12.94.

Thus devolving power to a local level is seen as not only encouraging political participation, but is also likely to result in a more democratic society in which decisions reflect local needs and concerns.

Whereas decentralisation is seen as enabling people to become more involved in the decisions that directly affect them, there are some differences of opinion as to what this might involve in practical terms:

> Decentralisation of course is very much the green thing, and working at the lowest possible level.[53]

> Decentralisation does not mean that you do everything at the lowest level.[54]

These statements are not necessarily contradictory, but refer to questions concerning what the appropriate level of decision making might be on particular issues.

However, such decisions can reveal apparent conflicts as can be seen in connection with attitudes concerning the role of the state. Some were doubtful that there was any role for the state in a green society:

> [T]he nation state has done more in terms of oppression, in terms of exploitation, in terms of environmental damage than any other single body that I can think of .... [H]ow we get to do away with the nation state yet take global responsibility seriously .... is one of the questions that green politics really has to answer.[55]

Such a decisive condemnation of the state was comparatively rare, though it did reflect a wider concern over centralised and distant forms of authority.

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53 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.
54 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
55 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

Others envisaged the problems involved in adopting such a position:

> [A]nother of the issues that I don't think the Greens have come to terms with is the issue of the state, because we have got certain policies which imply actually the break-up of the nation state, but you won't see those appearing in our administration sections .... [I]f you are looking at state management of industry, as a party which also likes to talk about decentralisation down to smaller scales, there are problems .... because .... there are certain industries which do not work efficiently at too small a scale, [for example] steel production. For the sort of technology that you are wanting say for wind generators or whatever cannot be done by your local blacksmith, and I really don't think we have sorted that one.[56]

Even allowing for the kind of decentralisation that I've mentioned, I do think there are certain services like an integrated transport network, like defence (so long as it seems to continue to be necessary), which are best run at a national level. I also think you would need national governments to work through international institutions on the subject of trade, because I don't think you are going to get any significant greening of trade, or indeed dealing with the international arms trade effectively, unless you get governments working together through international institutions .... Although .... there are many subjects currently run by and interfered with by states that can be decentralised.[57]

We're not saying we're going to get rid of the state, but we're looking at more local solutions, locally self-reliant economies and so on to reduce resource consumption, reduce impacts on the environment, give people more economic self-determination at a local level, so they will in theory, be in a better position to see what their local environment can sustain and are more directly in touch with the consequences of what they do.[58]

So despite acknowledging reservations about the extent of the role of the state, when asked to elaborate on the issue activists tended to adopt a pragmatic stance. This recognised the necessity of the state for the implementation of those policies requiring a national or

56 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
57 Interview with male local and national activist, 10.12.94.
58 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

international response, such as some areas of production, transport, defence, and foreign policy. Nevertheless, most activists placed their main emphasis on the need to increase local control, with relatively few specifying precisely which areas where state authority should be reduced and where it had a continuing role. For the most part it was those who had been continuously active at a national level who had seriously considered this issue, whilst local activists, though rarely directly addressing the subject, seemed to take for granted a continued role for the state in some areas, notwithstanding the anti-state rhetoric that was present in a few cases.

IV: Ethical Basis and Values

Another dimension revealed in the activists' accounts was the ethical or moral dimension of green politics and how this related to personal or collective values. Questions concerning what might constitute green values elicited a variety of responses:

> I think my personal values attracted me to green politics because I have always been concerned about particular issues. I can see them as a sort of thread through my life. I have always been concerned about justice, freedom, equality .... and they just struck me as being most representative about green politics.[59]

> I suppose they are more feminine values really; awareness, caring, nurturing, and being able to make connections.[60]

> [W]e have to believe that humans can somehow work out a way of living with each other and the planet, the natural environment .... in a way that doesn't replicate

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59 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
60 Interview with female local activist, 6.9.94.

> violence and gross selfishness, and just promotes more understanding, sensitivity and respect.[61]

Apart from the notions of equity and social justice referred to earlier, it can be seen that these were combined with values that required cultivating awareness and empathy towards others and the wider environment.

Respect and Responsibility

The values receiving the most endorsement were those concerning respect and responsibility towards others, the clearest statements on which came overwhelmingly from women interviewees:

> I suppose my vision is of everyone taking responsibility for their own lives and the lives of people around them.[62]

> [P]art of the green value system is this feeling that you have some sort of duty, some sort of responsibility .... for the way in which you conduct your life .... [P]art of that is the material side of it, but its also the way that you behave towards others, towards the world you live in .... And that you don't have a right to be totally absolutist about anything .... because if others are entitled to respect, they are entitled to their point of view, and that therefore .... theres not this feeling that you are absolutely right, that you have all the answers. But in terms of whether those are specific to green values I don't see those sort of social values as green at all. But the more green ones, the ones that would be specific to green would be values about the world around you and .... the respect and responsibility you have towards that, would be much more specific to green, its not something there to be used .... [T]he aspects about people being entitled to expect a positive future is very much green. I'm not convinced the other political parties see that far ahead at all.[63]

Whilst values such as respect and responsibility were not claimed to be green when applied to social relationships, nevertheless these

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61 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.
62 Interview with female local and national activist, 3.9.94.
63 Interview with female local and national activist, 15.9.94.

concepts were obviously integral to the worldview of the interviewees.

However, as the last statement above suggested, these notions could have a specifically green dimension when areas beyond the immediate social world were taken into consideration:

> Green politics is about people's responsibility to each other and about caring for each other, and its about handing down the life support systems to future generations and not ruining them.[64]

> Surely respect for each other is what its all about .... I said equality before, but also I think respect is what green politics is about, having respect for people, planet and animals. If we all had a little more respect, we'd have a happier place wouldn't we, and a safer environment.[65]

Thus as might be expected, ideals of respect and responsibility were also seen as involving consideration towards future generations, other species and the environment as a whole.

Obligations Towards the Non-Human World

This highlights the issue first raised in section I, concerning how the activists conceptualised the relationship between the human and the non-human world:

> We should have a lot of reverence for other life because we are the dominant species on this planet right now, and we should respect other forms of life and the world as equals, not as us being able to dominate, control and use.[66]

> You don't just put the person at the centre .... and everything else is subservient. The green ideology sees

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64 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.
65 Interview with female local and national activist, 16.9.94.
66 Interview with male local activist, 20.7.94.

everything as .... having its own importance, which may be different from the importance of human beings.[67]

You cannot take a purely anthropocentric view of the world and say that humans are free to live as they please, exploiting what they see around them.[68]

[A]nother thing which is very important is the deep ecology aspect, which for me is the idea that other species have got moral status.[69]

Such statements suggest that the activists have taken on some aspects of a deep ecological perspective in that they are prepared to challenge anthropocentric assumptions, especially as regards instrumental and exploitative attitudes towards the non-human world.

Nevertheless, though the moral responsibility of humans towards nature is fully acknowledged, it cannot be said that the activists have adopted an unqualified deep ecological or ecocentric position:

One of the things that I would like to talk about is the question of intrinsic values. Many people believe that .... because you have intrinsic values in things, you have intrinsic rights and that somehow is some sort of .... divinely ordained rights, and that the divine if you like is the intrinsic value of nature or whatever you like to call it. I do not believe that. I believe that in fact values are relative. Essentially and what is most important is that they are defined by humans, and normally defined in relation to the society in which humans find themselves .... [T]herefore I have no time for this sort of religious idea that, you know, all animals are wonderful .... I do not accept that the smallpox virus has an absolute right to life.[70]

I think it is inappropriate to take models of nature and impose them on human society .... nature changes. I don't believe nature is stable. I believe that human beings can enrich nature immensely, you know, as part of nature.[71]

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67 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.
68 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
69 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.
70 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
71 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

As these statements reveal, whereas most activists would be prepared to grant nature a moral status that extended beyond its usefulness to humans, there was also a recognition of the possible problems involved in adopting such a stance. One of these revealed above is that human needs and the existence of other life forms may conflict, as in the case of microbes and viruses that pose a particular hazard to humans. In this example other species are not seen as necessarily having a right to exist for their own sake if the possibility arises to reduce human suffering by eradicating them. This suggests that although most activists saw humans as a part of nature, this did not preclude actively intervening in the natural world. The last two statements also demonstrate an awareness that conceptions of nature are socially mediated. Thus the values which humans have attributed to nature are perceived to have arisen out of a set of social relationships in particular historical circumstances, though those activists who raised this topic tended to emphasise that these circumstances would be partly conditioned by interactions between society and the natural world. Though activists did often draw on concepts borrowed from ecology as part of their discourse, at the same time some of them at least realised that applying models apparently derived from nature to human society was problematic.

Tolerance, Freedom, and Non-Violence

Combined with notions of responsibility and respect, tolerance was another central value cited by a number of activists:

> [T]olerance and understanding of each other is the be all and end all of it.[72]

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72 Interview with male local activist, 20.7.94.

> One other thing I haven't mentioned yet is tolerance of course. I mean that hangs together with the diversity in the Green Party. Its being tolerant of people who aren't exactly the same as you.[73]

> Having faced a lot of intolerance, it makes you believe a lot more strongly in tolerance.[74]

As well as encompassing the notion that one should respect those that hold differing viewpoints, it was frequently implied that a diversity of viewpoints, like ecological diversity, was something to be positively encouraged. Also, as the last quote reveals, this commitment to tolerance was in some cases based on the experience of being regarded as different or as an outsider, something which seemed to encourage a sense of empathy with others on the margins of society.

Another core value to be considered in relation to notions of responsibility and tolerance was that of freedom:

> What I think green politics is about really is freedom .... What I mean by freedom is being able to do what you want without infringing anyone else's ability to do what they want .... People talk about the freedom to use the car, but that's just selfish .... We have to think about the freedoms of other people and the other animals we share the world with now and in the future.[75]

Though rights, such as those to do with personal autonomy and freedom of expression, were seen as being of central importance, they were invariably balanced by notions of responsibility, since anything suggesting selfishness or greed was seen as contrary to everything that green politics stood for.

Some, though by no means all, activists also saw non-violence as an important principle:

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73 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.
74 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.
75 Interview with female local and national activist, 3.9.94.

> Non-violence is another [principle], which again is a philosophy in itself. It means total opposition to all weapons of mass destruction .... but at the interpersonal level, a seeking of ways of conciliation and conflict resolution, rather than allowing conflict to take place .... [I]ts reflected in the political processes of the party itself.[76]

> I'm probably too pacifist for the Green Party, because they are not meant to be pacifist .... but I'm totally pacifist. I can't cope with violence at all.[77]

> [M]ost greens would emphasise non-violence, but I personally don't believe in that.[78]

Though most activists agreed with an emphasis on non-violence, especially when applied to interpersonal relations and the use of weapons of mass destruction, some had reservations as to whether it was an appropriate response in all circumstances. Those who took this latter stance believed in the right of self-defence for those threatened by violence. Arguments for this position were usually made in terms of the Green Party's defence policy (which seeks to encompass both perspectives), or came from interviewees who had been involved in anti-fascist activities.

The Relationship of Means and Ends

Regarding the activists' own explanation of the ethical basis of green politics, central to this seemed to be their understanding of the relationship of means and ends:

> [I]ts this thing of not being dogmatic about one view being the correct view and everyone else is wrong sort of thing; of accepting much more different people and their characteristics and their perspectives; and actually rather thinking along the lines .... the ends are the

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76 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
77 Interview with female local activist, 31.8.94.
78 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

means. The way that you go about things is part and parcel of what you are trying to work towards.[79]

I always think a lot about how we actually do it. Sort of not subjugating the means to the end .... You have to live as well as you can what you want to achieve. Its all very moral I'm afraid .... its terribly, terribly ethical. Most people that join the Green Party have got quite a strong moral sense .... [P]eople I've met in the Green Party .... always are very anxious to do the right thing. I think green politics .... is quite philosophical as well .... perhaps that comes with the ethics, but people think a lot about the consequences of things.[80]

The impossibility of separating means and ends, the need to consider the consequences of actions, and the importance of attempting to put beliefs into practice, were all common themes. These aspects will be further explored as part of a consideration of the importance of lifestyle as part of the activists' political practice.

V: Lifestyle

Surprisingly issues relating to lifestyle were given proportionally more discussion than any other topic covered during the interviews. It was not that the activists prioritised lifestyle at all. Rather it was something that they wrestled with publicly and privately; it engaged them, it was problematic, and in many ways it was at the heart of their politics:

> Lifestyle is central to me because .... its not a true politics if its only something that you do when you go to a meeting, then forget about when you come home.[81]

> Green politics expects you to make changes. It doesn't just expect you to turn up at meetings. So it does

79 Interview with female local and national activist, 22.12.94.
80 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
81 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

> actually expect you to think fairly carefully about what you do and how you behave and I think that is quite demanding in the political sense.[82]

Hence lifestyle is related to what the activists see as a need to put their beliefs into practice, not just in their political activities, but also in their everyday life.

This aspect of lifestyle can be seen as a distinguishing feature of green politics and its intention of bringing about a society in which people reduce their impact on the environment. Thus those advocating such changes were concerned to be seen to be practicing what they preached:

> [T]he worst thing you can possibly do as a politician is say you do this while carrying on doing that. You can't be hypocritical about it. I mean, again its a cleft stick because people say - yeah the Green Party's fine but you want us all to live like you - don't turn up the fire, put on woolly jumpers - you know the compost heap in the back yard - we don't want to do that or we can't do that, it doesn't sound a lot of fun to us and its too far removed from our everyday life and experience. On the one hand I do it because I think its right and I want to minimise my impact on the planet and thereby help myself and in my view other people. At the same time you can be seen to be too far ahead and just too way out, therefore whatever you say is rejected. But having said that the whole of the Green Party is not like me, and a whole lot of them drive cars and do all sorts of other things that other people say - that is not very green is it? So you've got to be careful to live up to your standards and say well I'm not perfect either, but what we're asking is that we all take a few steps .... not being seen as holier than thou and making it look achievable to people.[83]

However, as the statement above shows, many of the activists were aware of the dilemmas this posed as regards communicating their message to the general public.

Some activists could be seen as taking their advocacy for practicing a green lifestyle to extremes:

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82 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
83 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

> I believe very much in personal integrity as an ideal and it grieves me to go into the home of another Green Party activist and sit in an overheated room .... I see my personal lifestyle as having to be shaped, to be consistent with my political and religious beliefs, so I have quite naturally, and without much difficulty moved into a lifestyle in which baths are out, in which I will not use a car for personal transport .... and in which domestic heating is at a level which few other people would tolerate.[84]

The expression of this kind of moral exhortation in which others were implicitly expected to adopt something of a similar Spartan regime was comparatively rare, though it would be possible to relate such attitudes to accusations that green politics contains strands of puritanism or even latent authoritarianism. This issue will be examined in Chapter 6.

By no means all activists saw lifestyle as an important component of their political practice:

> I know it ought to be but it isn't. To my shame I don't lead a very green life at all.[85]

> Well I don't think it is for mine. As you can see I'm a smoker, I'm a drinker, I live in conventional circumstances, I run a van .... Yes we recycle some of our materials, we don't recycle all of it .... We could do further than that but essentially I'm not a lifestyle green. Essentially I'm a political activist.[86]

Those who admitted to not practicing a very green lifestyle were often apologetic about it and invariably followed their statement to this effect with a list of the things that they did do, generally involving some form of recycling. Given that recycling is regarded as something of a least worst option as far as Green Party policy is

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84 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
85 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
86 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

concerned, it was surprising that some activists thought of lifestyle in these terms.

Other activists expressed a sense of ambivalence concerning such activities:

> We recycle bottles here .... cans we don't .... because the nearest can-bank is so far away. I say that but .... they've just put a can-bank next to the bottle-bank so bloody hell, something else to carry. I do find all this recycling very tiring. I feel obliged to do it because I'm a member of the Green Party, no other reason. If I wasn't I'd just chuck them in the bin I think. There are bigger things going on in the world - me recycling one bottle when ICI are doing God knows what.[87]

> I think lifestyle can be used to obscure the political and structural issues. I think the key problem isn't people using less resources, but structural influences that actually demand that people use lots of energy .... I wouldn't say anybody in our society leads a green lifestyle, but elements of it are very important to me .... such as not having a full-time job, not eating meat, [as a father] caring for my child as much as I can, minimising resource use, minimising dependence on commodities, spending a lot of time cooking .... All of the things I do for a green lifestyle I get a lot of satisfaction from, but I do think there can be a puritanical form of green politics, whereas I think it should be joyful and celebratory. I don't think it should be guilty.[88]

Such statements demonstrate an awareness of the structural contradictions involved in attempting to lead a green lifestyle as part of political practice, yet in seeing a need to do so the interviewees were not following any explicit requirement. In all of the literature produced by the Green Party there are no exhortations that members ought to practice a green lifestyle, but an expectation that they should practice what they preach does seem to have taken root as part of the culture of Party members in a way that is perhaps unique to green politics.

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87 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.
88 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

However, most activists, whilst admitting the importance of lifestyle, adopted a pragmatic stance:

> Lifestyle is integral, even if you don't necessarily abide by it .... There are lots of aspects which are contradictory, but again it has to do with tolerance.[89]

> I believe that it is important that some people adopt a green lifestyle. I don't think its necessarily incumbent on everyone or any individual who supports green politics .... [I]n my case I don't own a car, I use public transport and I recycle my bottles and my cans. That is what I do in terms of lifestyle green politics. Also important in lifestyle green politics is that I treat people differently because I am a green .... I do think its important that I also don't engage in any activities which would be deeply anti-green.[90]

As the last statement shows, lifestyle is not just concerned with consumption and reducing environmental impacts, but also extends to considering the social dimension.

Lifestyle and Social Relations

Such a concern may not necessarily involve living an obvious green lifestyle but rather focuses on improving the quality of one's social relationships. Some activists conceived of this social dimension of lifestyle as operating at a community level:

> In terms of other aspects of lifestyle, I think we see ourselves as being community activists as it were. We do see ourselves as having some responsibility to do something in terms of our local community, and that I think is an important part of lifestyle, that you don't shut your door and shut everybody else out, that we are good neighbours, or try to be.[91]

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89 Interview with male local activist, 20.7.94.
90 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
91 Interview with male local and national activist, 10.12.94.

Though such community activism was often undertaken under the auspices of the local Green Party, it was also seen as extending beyond that to include general social relations.

Many women activists in particular emphasised this aspect of lifestyle in a social sense in terms of being true to their ideals on an interpersonal level:

> Its always a balancing act. I try, and I don't always succeed .... I guess I try as hard as I can to be true to the values that I espouse. I try not to be hypocritical .... I try not to be into possessiveness. I do try to share the things that I've got. I do try to give as much as I can give .... I'm not talking about in money or in material things, but emotionally .... I'm not always successful ...., there are areas of conflict, there are bound to be.[92]

> [I]ts part of thinking you are trying to put into practice as much as you can of what you are saying needs to be changed. That relates to relations with other people as well as working practices, and the sorts of things you do, and how you do [them]. Or the general thing of thinking very much about the sorts of things you are prepared to pay money for, the sorts of things you are prepared to encourage .... their circulation within society .... [I]ts trying to .... encourage work practices which are co-operative, and also relations with people as a whole where you are trying to have much less rigid expectations about people and judgements about people .... You can't have .... the sort of ideal of what you want things to be like and expect that some sort of sudden action will transform things, because this change is very much to do with human attitudes and behaviour, and I think you've got to put yourself into some sort of position where you can practice things yourself. Its the sort of psychological thing as well .... theres a lot of stuff within you which can actually prevent that actually happening unless you actually put things into practice and see what comes up .... So it is trying to do the most that I can, in as many ways as I can, to try to really move real revolutionary change. But I can also see that is tied up in my own life. Therefore I have very much been trying to see what things are in me which are also part of the problem. I mean things to do with my behaviour, my attitudes, the sort of material things even that I might want .... They are all constantly looked at.[93]

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92 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.
93 Interview with female local and national activist, 22.12.94.

As these statements indicate such ideals can be difficult to live up to. They are also quite demanding in that they can require a close scrutiny of all aspects of life; consumption, work, social relations, and personal attitudes and behaviour. However, such practices not only provide opportunities for the activists to identify what they believe needs to be changed, but also a means of consciousness raising and personal transformation.

Alternative Forms of Satisfaction and the Critique of Consumerism

Lifestyle also includes a concern with seeking alternative forms of satisfaction, not necessarily based on material consumption. Again this may be conceived of in terms of improving the quality of social relationships:

> I think the fundamental thing which separates the Green Party from the other three is that the whole notion that economic growth is good is a false alleyway, because it links personal possessions with happiness. It is pure materialism. But what the Green Party is saying is what matters to you more than anything else, its not the quality of your hi-fi, not the newness of your car, its how you get on with your family, and your work colleagues, and your friends.[94]

> I don't think there are many green activists who would disagree with the notion that there are more profound things that you can get out of life than what most people get out of the way we live now. There is just that idea of conviviality and living the good life, interacting with people rather than things.[95]

In such accounts an emphasis on improved social relationships and notions of what constitutes the good life are favourably contrasted with those values of society in which well-being is conceived of in terms of the accumulation of money and material possessions.

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94 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
95 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

This kind of perspective also extends to consider wider social objectives in relation to the purpose and meaning of life:

> The Party is against the irresponsible nature of modern production and consumption. It's irresponsible and it's inhumane. I'd like a politics that encouraged people to live a life in a more joyous way I suppose, because when everything is geared towards training, putting children in school to train them to be economic units - what's the point of it all? What are you alive for?[96]

> [I]t's this thing of finding what is it that gives some sort of meaning to life .... I do think this sort of horrible scramble for more material goods is .... a substitute .... [People] are looking for something, life isn't satisfactory, there is something else they've got to look for and maybe money and consumer goods will actually do that, but people find that is not enough .... [I]t is finding some other non-material wealth which is what I think is so important. But I mean you do find people who are in actual material poverty but actually don't feel quite so restless and sort of unhappy as a lot of people who are in our society, who have got much more material goods, but you know still feel that they are racing around looking for something more.[97]

Thus the values underlying this aspect of lifestyle involve a critique of capitalist consumerism and forms of alienation resulting from seeking fulfilment through commodities. Instead green value perspectives emphasise a search for satisfaction through non-commodified activities, which they argue, offer more potential for fulfilment.

Green Politics and the Spiritual Dimension

Such an emphasis on alternative forms of satisfaction and on a search for meaning in many accounts of green politics lead on to the question of whether it includes a spiritual dimension. For just over a third of the activists this was certainly the case:

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96 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
97 Interview with female local and national activist, 22.12.94.

> For me personally there is no separation between my spiritual beliefs and my political beliefs.[98]

> Well one of the things that attracted me about the Green Party was the recognition that there was a spiritual element.[99]

Precisely how the activists conceived of spirituality varied greatly, though there were also common themes.

A few activists interpreted spirituality within a conventional religious framework. For example four of the activists were practicing Christians who saw no contradiction between their faith and their political practice. A member of the Church of England stated that, 'Jesus would have been a green'.[100] A Catholic placed great emphasis on the connection between seeking to put her beliefs into practice in everyday life and the social and communal dimension of green politics. A Methodist talked of moments when she felt a part of nature, whilst a Quaker made the point that, 'the environment is God's creation, so that is a fundamental motivation when you see the environment being destroyed'.[101] Each of them recognised in terms of their faith the sacredness of all life and the creation as a whole.

Another slightly larger group expressed similar sentiments, though understood these in what might be described as a New Age or pagan framework:

> I do believe in the power of the planet, the power of the Earth, and I don't think that comes from the Green Party because the majority of people in the party would just go, what a load of old rubbish .... But the spiritual dimension is very important in my life and it does

98 Interview with male national activist, 23.7.94.
99 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.
100 Interview with female local activist, 31.8.94.
101 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.

> naturally link in with green politics. We can't pollute a planet that is living.[102]

Whereas on the whole such expressions of belief were personal, some activists had been involved in developing various symbolic and ritual practices to reinforce this sense of identity with nature, whether through a loose network of pagans within the Party or through other groups.

Another third of the activists were not at all religious in the conventional sense, but nevertheless had feelings that went beyond an aesthetic appreciation of nature to conceive of a sense of the sacred applied to life and nature:

> I'm actually theologically hostile to the term spirituality .... Basically I would see that it [my belief] is very materialistic in the sense of what is matter and the Earth is sacred .... I very much take on board Blake's phrase that all that lives is holy .... you know, the Earth is sacred .... [P]ersonally I wouldn't conceptualise that in terms of deities, but I can see the mythological power of things like Pan and Gaia.[103]

> I'm not a religious person really .... but I think this is the only life we know about. So to us its sacred really, because it has to deal with areas that have meaning. We can give meaning to it by how we treat it.[104]

> I need to feel some sort of grounded spiritual connection with nature .... I need to feel that there's contact with that in what I'm doing .... I suppose its got something to do with the way that I value land and plants, rocks, water, the weather - you know - nature .... I do feel I've tried to develop my own spirituality which is rooted in .... that sort of understanding of our connection [with nature], dependence on [its] health and its availability and being more aware of the cyclical nature of the natural world and how we are a part of that. And to me that is something I need to weave into any social political structure and relations .... I'm not going to go down on bended knee and sort of worship, but I have a very

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102 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.
103 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.
104 Interview with female local activist, 6.9.94.

> deep sort of understanding and appreciation of [nature] I suppose.[105]

> I do believe in a very general sense in a reverence for nature because it is incredibly beautiful. Frankly it's its beauty more than its function that is important to me at that level. I think the whole idea of an ecology, it is not just something that is aesthetically beautiful, it is also a beautiful intellectual idea. It's self-regulating, it's wonderful, it all works, you can look at it and you can watch it, it's fascinating .... I mean if I had a religious concept that I wanted to define as such, I would say that yes, that I think that everything has within it some sort of, I don't like words like life-force or life-essence, but it has life in it, and it is worth respecting for that alone .... I believe that people are worthy of respect, irrespective of what they do. The fact that they are humans and thinking beings and all the rest of it, means that they are entitled to a certain amount of respect .... [M]y reverence for life is, if you like, collective as well as individual .... I'm not sure whether there is a God and to what extent spiritual ideas are appropriate. There is no doubt more nonsense talked in the name of religion and spirituality than in most things.[106]

Though for those expressing such views a belief in a spiritual aspect of green politics is very much a personal matter, a similar set of common themes emerged in which a special value was placed on human life as well as nature as a whole.

However, there are also about a third of the activists who clearly state that they are not interested in the spiritual dimension at all:

> What is important for other people that isn't important for me is the spiritual side of it.[107]

> [T]he more spiritual side of it has never been particularly important to me. I know for some people it really is a question of a close feeling of oneness with the Earth, but for me that is not the driving force in it. The driving force for me is the need to make changes.[108]

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105 Interview with female local and national activist, 22.12.94.
106 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
107 Interview with female local and national activist, 15.9.94.
108 Interview with female national activist, 20.9.94.

Indeed the Green Party contains a significant proportion of atheists and humanists who do not see their politics in spiritual terms. When a new section was added to the Manifesto on the spiritual dimension of green politics there were complaints that this failed to recognise those who did not share such beliefs. This led to the wording being amended to give equal weight to the validity of a humanist perspective.[109]

This reflects the general consensus within the Green Party of the importance of a non-dogmatic respect for other people's personal beliefs:

> I think a spiritual dimension is a very important part of life .... [A]s far as the politics side of it goes, all you can really do is create an environment where spirituality can flourish unhindered. People have got to be allowed to follow their own spiritual paths .... While I see it as likely to be an important part of a green activist's life, I certainly don't want to prescribe things for people.[110]

Thus it could be said that whilst many within the Party do recognise a spiritual dimension to green politics, such beliefs can take a variety of forms, though there are obvious common themes. However a commitment to such beliefs cannot be seen as obligatory in that a substantial proportion of activists do not regard them as a necessary part of their practice. As to the lifestyle aspect of green politics this does seem to be an integral component as far as most of those involved are concerned, whether this is seen in terms of reduced consumption, improved social relations, or seeking alternative forms of satisfaction. However, such concerns seem to go beyond an individualistic response to become part of a collective political practice.

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109 See, Manifesto for a Sustainable Society, 1995, PB 308-309, and the revised version amended in 1996.
110 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

Conclusion

The accounts given by the Green Party activists clearly reveal the extent to which they understand the content of green politics as combining a number of elements. These include a distinctive formulation of economics, which by introducing ecological or holistic forms of analysis, and prioritising issues relating to the quality of life, criticises the human and environmental consequences of a global capitalist system predicated on unrestrained economic growth, which they would seek to replace with a sustainable society. A second aspect relates to their emphasis on notions of equity and social justice, which highlights their concern with ensuring access to resources and opportunities, not just within their own society, but also with particular reference to global inequalities between North and South, as well as considering the needs of future generations, and relations with the non-human world by recognising human responsibilities towards other species. A third element concerns the activists' political alternative which is envisaged in terms of participatory democracy operating up from a decentralised level in a society which would encourage consensus, co-operation, communal values, and self-reliance. The ethical and value basis of green politics makes up the fourth element with an emphasis being placed on respect towards others, including future generations and the non-human world, where diversity is celebrated and tolerance of difference is encouraged. Though the activists place a high priority on personal freedom, this is seen as being balanced by social responsibility, whilst the ends they are seeking to attain are

regarded as bound up with the means adopted to achieve them, hence their rejection of violence except in situations requiring self-defence. The fifth element comes under the heading of lifestyle which includes those attempts by the activists to put their beliefs into practice, not just in the area of consumption, but also as regards work and social relations, incorporating a search for alternative satisfactions in ways that could be seen by some, though by no means all, as incorporating a spiritual dimension.

In discussing these areas the interviewees revealed a high degree of reflexivity. They had obviously thought deeply about the issues that concerned them, were generally well informed about the debates that arose in response, and were aware of possible contradictions in some of the stances they were taking. It was also clear that they did not see the content of green politics as something fixed, recognising that their beliefs were still developing and likely to be subject to modification over time. There was also an awareness that disagreements, compromises, tensions, and contradictions were inevitable, leaving scope for individual members to dissent regarding some aspects, whilst broadly accepting the package as a whole. Such attitudes were commonly expressed in statements such as:

> I still don't think the party has got it right as to how its got to work because there are a lot of questions that we haven't answered yet to my satisfaction.[111]

> I believe in the fundamentals of what its got to say. I don't agree with some of the detail.[112]

> I don't even think green politics has got it absolutely right, but its getting there, its the nearest thing.[113]

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111 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
112 Interview with female local and national activist, 2.8.94.
113 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

Whilst individual activists did not feel that they had to accept every aspect of the package, and were likely to put their energies into some areas rather than others, disagreements regarding the overall content of green politics tended to be comparatively minor. It was also freely acknowledged that though green politics was incomplete in that there were some areas it had not yet adequately come to terms with, the general feeling was that it did provide a distinct basis for understanding the world.

As to the question of whether their beliefs constituted a distinct green ideology, some activists showed themselves to be hostile, or at least wary of what they saw as an implied restriction arising from being defined in this way, stating that:

> I don't start from a position of ideology. I would start from the position of common principles that greens share. Ideology is dangerous because ideology can all too quickly become dogma.[114]

> Green ideology? I mean you see there are various green ideologies. I think the most noticeable thing about the green ideology or the green movement is there is no orthodox ideology .... ultimately it must be flexible, it is receptive to all inputs. This is the nature of holism, the nature of green policies are that one element cannot work without all elements being in place.[115]

Thus there was for some a tendency to reject the notion that their worldview constituted an ideology because they interpreted this as implying rigidity or determinism. Those adopting this view preferred to regard their worldview as open and able to encompass a variety of approaches which would ensure that it retained a broad appeal, but at the same time accepted that it did incorporate a set of common principles which by applying a holistic approach drew attention to

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114 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.
115 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

the interconnections between different areas of their concern. Others found the concept of the existence of a distinct green ideology less problematic, accepting that theirs was a political belief system that could be distinguished from the outlooks associated with other political positions. Exactly how the activists saw their beliefs in relation to other political traditions will be further explored in Chapter 6.

One of the most surprising findings was that environmental or ecological issues did not predominate over other themes in the minds of the activists. It was not that these issues were not considered to be important, but they were just one part of a package involving a wider set of concerns which also addressed economic, social, political, and ethical issues. However, as well as acting as an initial focus in the form of an awareness of the long-term consequences of environmental problems, ecology could be seen to provide a connecting thread running through the different aspects of the activists' worldview in the form of a holistic analysis which drew attention to the interrelation between all areas of life. For this reason, rather than exclusively concentrating on problems in one area, because actions in one sphere were seen as leading to impacts elsewhere, solutions to environmental as well as other concerns were conceived of as requiring a radical transformation of society at all levels. In particular their analysis of the causes of environmental problems and their proposed solutions to them, were largely conceived of in economic terms, in response to the destructive impacts created by the dynamics of the current capitalist system. Since it was the activists' conviction that such an unrestricted economic expansion would increasingly confront physical and biological limits, it could be said that their outlook contains elements

of a natural reductionism, though their critique of economic growth was also based on an understanding that alternative forms of economic and social organisation would allow an improved quality of life and a sustainable relationship with the biosphere.

This critique of the consequences of current economic practices can also be related to another central finding, which concerned the strength of the emphasis placed on the issue of social justice by the majority of activists, which they saw as indivisible from their environmental and economic concerns. Though there was a general insistence that there could be no lasting solutions to environmental problems without addressing issues of poverty, gender, ethnicity, the North/South divide, future generations, and the non-human world, in their own practice there was a tendency to interpret social justice as concerned with autonomy and freedom of expression. Such a dichotomy perhaps reflects the social and cultural background influencing the socialisation of a large proportion of Party members. This can also be related to their conception of a political alternative which, being opposed to bureaucracy and hierarchy, accounts for their emphasis on participatory forms of democracy and decentralisation. However, as the activists' discussions of these topics demonstrate, it was not always clear that they had thought through how their beliefs might be implemented in practical terms, as revealed by their ambivalent attitudes towards the state. Though a few of them had attempted to consider the relationship between green politics and the state, it was a considerable surprise to find that most activists gave little indication that they had seriously addressed this issue, which is surely a fundamental one for any political party whose future objects presumably include participating in government. Given that a significant proportion of them had worked within the

extended state, it was also odd that their conception of it was so narrow and abstract. Their failure to confront this issue can partly be related back to their anti-authoritarian sentiments, as well as being seen in the light of the gap between the Party's current strategic position and their long-term policy goals. It could be surmised that once the possibility of gaining significant political representation became more of a reality, they would necessarily be required to consider this question, as have other green parties in such a situation.

Another significant finding concerned the values held by the activists, which did not seem to prioritise the ethical relationship between humanity and nature above other more recognisably human values. Though they fully accepted the importance of human responsibility towards the non-human world, they could not be described as unqualified deep ecologists or ecocentrics. Whilst their use of concepts borrowed from ecology in order to describe or analyse the world, did also seem to carry implicit moral imperatives, these ecological ideas were expressed in conjunction with social values including those of justice, participation, autonomy, and responsibility. Though this attempt to combine ecological imperatives with humanist values could be seen as potentially conflicting, since accepting elements of a biological determinist stance in the form of a recognition of natural limits would seem to be at variance with an acknowledgement that values are socially constructed, the activists did not perceive their synthesis of these two positions as contradictory. Similarly they sought to resolve possible tensions between notions of autonomy and responsibility by relating the ends they wished to attain to the means adopted in order to achieve them,

as revealed by their critique of purely instrumental forms of rationality.

This may go some way towards explaining another key finding which concerns the attention given by the activists to attempts to put these values into practice in their political activities and in their everyday lives. Though not all activists gave equal attention to such activities, and whilst it cannot be seen as more important than other areas of their concern, perhaps lifestyle engaged their attention precisely because its practice was so problematic. Whilst it was generally accepted that seeking to live a green lifestyle in modern society was fraught with difficulties, if not all but impossible, nevertheless most, if not all of the activists, in some way or another engaged in such activities despite the problems this entailed. This is perhaps because lifestyle activities were able to serve a number of useful roles. These include consciousness raising in which the activists are able to explore some of the issues which concern them, whether in the areas of consumption, work, social relations, or the search for alternative forms of satisfaction. Lifestyle also fosters group solidarity and acts as an expression of a new cultural identity in which the activists are able to put into practice what they preach and act as an example to others in what might be regarded as an exemplary moral project. This can also be understood as incorporating anticipatory practices in which the activists can develop new strategies and create new democratic spaces. Thus far from being a denial of collective political action, lifestyle can operate to extend and enhance the practice of green politics.

Hence green politics, as revealed in the activists' accounts, can be identified as constituting a distinct ideology which reflects the outlook of a group which shares a number of common social

characteristics. As such it encompasses a comprehensive worldview which incorporates a recognisable set of understandings and explanations applicable to all areas of life, including the economic, social, political, and ethical dimensions, as well as providing the basis for a collective practice. Having established what a green ideology consists of according to the beliefs and practices of those involved, the next Chapter will seek to analyse the activists' accounts in more depth, by interpreting these alongside some of the theoretical perspectives from Chapter 1. This will serve the dual purpose of examining the extent to which the theoretical portrayals of green ideology are corroborated by the activists' accounts, as well as considering whether these perspectives are able to provide an additional layer of explanation in order to elucidate the meanings ascribed to green politics by those involved.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSING ACTIVIST ACCOUNTS

Introduction

This Chapter comprises of an analysis of the Green Party activists' accounts of the content of green politics as outlined in Chapter 4 which will be undertaken by considering these findings in terms of theoretical perspectives drawn from Chapter 1. The intention is to evaluate the applicability of the theoretical portrayals of green politics when set against accounts of the actual beliefs and practices of those involved, as well as to explore the extent to which such perspectives are able to provide interpretations or explanations which go beyond the self-understanding of those articulating this worldview. Rather than attempting to analyse all aspects of the content of green ideology as revealed in the activists' accounts, this Chapter will focus on five main themes: environmentalism, ecology, and the critique of economic growth; social justice, class, and exclusion; green politics and the state; nature as value, the ethic of responsibility, and the critique of instrumental rationality; and lifestyle as politics.

These themes have been selected because they correspond to each of the five general categories into which the activists' worldview was organised in Chapter 4, as well as representing the most significant findings revealed in the interviews. They also can be related to theoretical perspectives from Chapter 1, though in the sections that follow the discussions will concentrate only on those

theories which most directly relate to these chosen topics. It will be argued that whilst some theoretical approaches are able to contribute useful insights towards an interpretation and explanation of green ideology, even the strongest accounts do not fully reflect the range or depth of meanings applied to these different areas by the activists themselves, nor seem to grasp how the package is understood as a whole. By grounding the examination of green ideology in the outlook of those involved, it is also possible to resolve some of the problems identified within the theoretical portrayals which are often based on a misapprehension of what greens actually believe and practice.

I: Environmentalism, Ecology, and the Critique of Economic Growth

As was seen in Chapter 1, many academic accounts, particularly those written from the viewpoint of political theory, argued that the feature which distinguishes green politics from other perspectives is that it is ecocentric. However, it is not immediately apparent from the accounts of Green Party activists that ecocentricism, as described by O'Riordan, Eckersley, and Dobson, was the defining feature of their worldview. This might be seen as confirming the suggestion made by both Eckersley and Dobson that green parties are merely environmentalist, except that most of the activists were highly critical of environmentalism as an approach. The interviewees identified a number of problems with environmentalism, from which they sought to distinguish their own position, as the following statements demonstrate:

> Environmentalism very much is bolt on a policy to protect a certain species of bird and keep the people out you know. Whereas green politics should be about how do we arrange our society so we don't need islands of sanctuary for birds, because our society is so poisonous that they are dying out. Green politics would be a way of extending the reserves to your whole environment, to your whole country, so you are able to have a policy of symbiosis: so your farming policy; your social policy; your health policy are all integrated in the sense that they are not now.[1]

> To me the environment is a holistic meaning of the term, and its not the narrow environmentalism that the media and the general public often portray us as. They expect greens when they go on the media to talk about saving the rainforest. For me that's not really what its about, its the surface of it, but its not what's underneath.[2]

> I've been very frustrated by the way the media presents what green is, and its just .... another way of substituting environment, environment then gets to be called green, and its seen to be something which is separated from any other social, economic, political aspect of life .... [I]t's good that there is concern about protecting aspects of the natural environment that are say under threat, whether it be land, resources, the air, or water, plants, forests and all that. But there is no point .... having access to these places if you know that humans are living in a way that is hell for the majority .... Really in a way I mean it is still a privileged number of people who can have that access perhaps and appreciation of nature.[3]

Thus environmentalism is regarded as not constituting an integrated approach, for in seeking to tackle particular issues it ignores wider problems. This is linked to criticism of the narrow definition of environmental issues perpetrated by the media, which tends to separate such concerns from economic, social, and political factors.

Consequently the activists differentiate green politics from environmentalism on the grounds that it attempts to construct a political alternative which in addressing economic and social

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1 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
2 Interview with male local activist, 2.9.94.
3 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

dimensions, seeks to tackle the causes of environmental problems rather than just the symptoms, as revealed by comments such as:

> All the pressure groups .... are basically looking at the symptoms .... and the only way you are going to save the environment as a whole is to look at the root causes of it .... [in] the whole economic system. You can only change the economic system through politics.[4]

> I do see that there is a difference between those who believe that a political alternative has to be constructed .... and those who believe that it is possible to achieve a more ecological society by other routes .... I still think that if you want to change society somebody has to be involved within the political system .... If the other political parties don't feel that there is some kind of political threat to their own support they are certainly not going to run long-term environmental policies because their politics is essentially short-term.[5]

> It is different from environmentalism .... I mean environmentalism isn't asked to put up social policy alternatives, its beginning to wake up to the need for economic alternatives. As is the government .... but I think that is due more to external pressures than their ideological drive. I mean green politics .... is expected to produce a total framework for a different kind of society. Environmentalism doesn't have to do that. It does an important job manning the road blocks and trying to hold back the tide .... I mean all the evidence says to me that these victories will pretty soon be wiped out by losses somewhere else, and [if] the goal of the economic system is growth and expansion of production and consumption, then you can put fences around as many nature reserves as you like, but even they are going to go eventually .... [T]here are environmentalists who see this and say that there have to be changes in the economy, but I don't think its just a matter of measuring .... the cost .... You cannot keep taking more and more, whether you cost it into the system or not, because if you do and then someone's expected to pay for it. They can only pay for it in our current economic system by going off and destroying some other part of the environment .... [G]reen politics has to take more of a world view [of] the implications beyond this country .... it has to look at social policies, and worst of all has to actually persuade people to vote for them, because most people don't see it as in their interests to cut back on .... conventional resource consumption. Environmentalists don't have to do that. They have to go along and say here is a

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4 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.
5 Interview with male national and local activist, 10.12.94.

> horrible problem, don't you agree, people say yeah, you're quite right, I'll sign your petition. But those environmentalists aren't asking them to pay for it in a way, or not pay for it in terms of taking less.[6]

So for the activists the main objective is to change the way the economic system operates, and they see the most effective means of bringing this about is to directly engage in the political process in order to advocate an alternative set of policies. Hence the ultimate objective of green politics is the creation of a sustainable society in which attempts to solve environmental problems cannot be separated from requirements for an alternative economic base, social justice, and participatory democracy.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the environmental groups are serving an important role by drawing attention to particular problems, and that organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have developed an economic critique and are becoming more politicised, they are regarded as remaining strategically limited to lobbying and campaigning on single issues. The activists considered that this resulted in a piecemeal and reformist approach that is unlikely to deliver a comprehensive long-term solution to the problems they are seeking to address. The grounds on which the Green Party activists differentiate green politics from environmentalism are remarkably similar to the criteria by which Dobson distinguished ecologism from environmentalism. This would suggest that his placing of the green parties in the latter category cannot be sustained.

At the same time it is also possible to challenge Dobson's later argument that environmentalism is not an ideology at all, because it can be appropriated by different political positions, with the

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6 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

exception of ecologism with which it remains incompatible. This is because despite differences of approach, the activists felt that they did share a great deal of common ground with the environmental groups. Support for this is provided by the fact that most of the activists had previously been involved in environmental groups, and by Rüdig et al.'s research which reveals that not only does a high proportion of the Party's members retain membership in environmental organisations, but that they actually tend to be more active in these groups than in the Green Party itself. Parallels can also be drawn with Cotgrove and Duff's research in the 1970s which uncovered a social profile and a set of attitudes amongst environmentalists that was not very different from that of the interviewees or the wider study of Green Party membership in Rüdig et al.'s survey. All of this suggests at least some continuity of social base and outlook between environmentalists and Green Party members. Nevertheless perceptible differences remain, some of which can be witnessed in the sense of frustration tinged with incomprehension expressed by the activists concerning what was perceived as the failure of many members of the environmental groups to recognise areas of common concern, which manifested itself in the decision not to support the Green Party, but instead to vote for other political parties in the hope of achieving short-term objectives.

That green politics cannot be described as merely a form of environmentalism is also indicated by the fact that less than a third of activists gave a priority to environmental factors. The relative absence of discussion of environmental issues by the activists was one of the most surprising findings of the research, but though this apparently contradicts the expectation of many political theoretical accounts, it shows some resonance with sociological approaches. It is

not necessarily that the activists believe that the environment is unimportant. To some extent they take the centrality of such issues for granted, but they do not see the environment as a separate category, rather conceiving of it as part of a wider set of concerns related to economic, social, political, and ethical factors.

Nevertheless, notions drawn from the science of ecology can be seen as providing integral components of a green ideology. One aspect of this relates to ways in which ecology may be taken to serve an ethical function. This will be considered in section IV below as part of an investigation of the ways ecological concepts may be interpreted as possible sources of values. Another aspect was revealed by Gouldner when he noted that ecology has a strategic function in that it can furnish the basis of a unifying ideology appealing to a broad constituency, as well as offering the possibility of overcoming potential divisions amongst different fractions of the New Middle Class. He applied this analysis to the technical intelligentsia, who were united by the interdisciplinary character of ecology, understanding it in terms of systems theory, and humanist intellectuals who interpreted it in romantic or organismic terms. It is not clear that this observation can be related to the Green Party for although it includes members who could be seen as being drawn from both class fractions, it is not apparent that they apply different understandings of ecological ideas in the way Gouldner suggests. Adopting his terms, despite a predominance of humanist intellectuals amongst the Green Party activists, their understanding of ecology cannot simply be characterised as romantic or organismic, for although elements of such a view are undoubtedly present, there is also a strong emphasis on systems approaches. This possibly implies a fusion between the two positions with ecology providing the basis

of a solidarity between different groups in the Party, as well as being regarded as having the potential to attract broad support on a non-class basis, as will be seen when the issue of class interests and green ideology is addressed in section II. This sense of solidarity or common identity as revealed in the discourse of the Green Party activists indicates another significant aspect of ecology as ideology in that it provides a means to analyse and understand the world.

There are echoes here of the suggestion made by Eyerman and Jamison that the knowledge interests on which environmental forms of collective identity are based involve a cosmological dimension. They see this as being derived from a reading of systems ecology which supplies a conceptual framework that can be applied to economics and other aspects of social life, to order reality and provide a sense of meaning. Though they suggest that this frame of reference is subject to reinterpretation as it is reproduced through practice, they also imply that activists are not particularly aware of this aspect of their beliefs, which Eyerman and Jamison perceive as being largely taken for granted. However, it must be borne in mind that their conclusions are not based on the study of the beliefs or practices of actual groups.

In considering the accounts of Green Party activists as outlined in Chapter 4, it can be seen that their worldview certainly does reveal the application of an ecological analysis to economics. They talk of the need to examine whole processes, flows and cycles, involving the adoption of a holistic viewpoint which considers the interrelationships connecting factors together, and seeks to balance different perspectives. Though to some extent aspects of this view are taken for granted in that for the most part they do not regard it as problematic to extend an ecological analysis to economic and social

life, it cannot be said that the activists are unaware of these beliefs. As it becomes apparent when other dimensions of their worldview are considered, such an interpretation of ecology is consciously applied to the analysis of all areas of life. When discussing this, whether in the context of their own socialisation into green politics, or regarding the difficulty of getting others to see things from their perspective, they often talk of the need to take a conceptual leap in order to see things in holistic terms and apply a green analysis. Though this suggests that such an application of ecological discourse does serve a cosmological function for green politics, these findings would appear to be at variance with the underestimation of the reflexivity of activists made by Eyerman and Jamison.

The Green Party activists' critique of economic growth also involves an ecological analysis, in that it implies that finite systems cannot be expanded indefinitely without adverse consequences. Chapter 1 revealed a number of commentators pointing towards this dimension of green ideology, though each tended to highlight different aspects of what was generally seen as a form of anti-economism. Though their explanations were very different, Inglehart and Gouldner both argued that ecological ideologies rejected conventional economic approaches seeking to increase the quantity of production, in favour of improving the quality of life. Whereas Inglehart saw this trend in terms of a postmaterialist generation valuing what was perceived to be absent from modern life, Gouldner understood it as an attempt by a knowledge based class to gain autonomy from dominant business and political interests. This can also be related to the argument presented by Cotgrove and Duff to the effect that opposition to free market capitalism and economic growth amongst environmentalists reflected their increasingly

marginalised position in the 'non-productive' sector, which enabled them to witness the adverse consequences of market-led approaches. Habermas too regarded such groups as removed from a 'productivist ethos' and opposed to the commodification of the lifeworld, whilst Offe also noted that 'decommodified' groups perceived economic progress as resulting in destructive impacts which adversely affected human needs and provided a focus for resistance. Whereas Offe believes that green demands for a brake to be applied to economic progress does not necessarily imply a conservative outlook, Benton suggests that an invocation of natural limits can be symptomatic of an 'epistemic' conservatism, despite expressions of support for communitarian, egalitarian, or emancipatory values. However, he does allow that an analysis of social, political, and economic limits need not be conservative, especially when this involves an opposition to the dynamics of capitalism and a radical alternative vision of the future requiring extensive institutional change.

These theoretical accounts all contain useful insights, though as explanations none of them provide a complete picture, either because of a tendency to concentrate on selected facets of these economic concerns, or because they do not clearly differentiate between views associated with divergent positions within the green movement. When these analyses are applied to a specific group, such as the Green Party, it is possible to identify all the elements identified above as present within the activists' accounts of economic growth. As Inglehart and Gouldner have implied, following their argument that a concentration on the quantity of production ignores deleterious long-term consequences, the activists place a major focus on improving the quality of life. This is discussed in terms of alternative economic indicators able to incorporate factors such as human and

environmental well-being. In their discussions of lifestyle it is also apparent that quality of life is understood in terms of reconceptualising human needs in ways that do not necessarily require satisfaction through increased levels of consumption. Such a view reflects a resistance to business interests, the values of free-market capitalism, and the consequences of commodification, as suggested by Gouldner, Cotgrove and Duff, Habermas, and Offe. Undoubtedly this can partly be attributed to the distinctive educational and occupational position of the activists. This will be further considered in sections II and III below. Though in terms of employment they are largely removed from the productive sector, it cannot be said that Green Party activists are anti-economistic, as many of the theorists above imply. Rather, in their opposition to dominant conceptions of economics based on the desirability of growth, they can be seen as advocating an alternative economics that has quality of life and sustainability as its main criteria.

This leads to the issue raised by Benton concerning how green politics conceptualises limits. From the activists' accounts above it does appear that they understand limits in terms of the biosphere since they recognise that ultimate global constraints exist. However, this does not mean that it is possible to regard them simply as natural reductionists, because their analysis includes a consideration of the interaction of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. This also relates to their critique of capitalism as a global system which is regarded as unsustainable precisely because its need for expansion must lead to ecological crisis as these limits are reached. Also to be considered is the fact that the activists envisage the requirement for an economic, social, and political transformation to create a sustainable society, which implies a recognition that any

response to perceived limits involves choices and could take a variety of forms. As it will be argued in both section IV below, and Chapter 6, the kind of society they wish to create cannot be described as conservative since it rejects technocratic and non-democratic solutions, and emphasises the need for emancipation and social justice. Hence, particular interpretations of ecology can be identified as central components of the ideology of Green Party activists, encouraging a holistic perspective that influences not only their view of economics, but, as will be seen in the sections that follow, it is also apparent in the social, political and ethical dimensions of their belief and practice.

II: Social Justice, Class and Exclusion

As was seen in Chapter 4 and section I above, whilst attitudes towards the environment might have been expected to occupy the most prominent position in the activists' description of what constituted green politics, this was not the case. Whereas only about a third of those interviewed singled out the environment as an important factor, more than two thirds of them chose to place a major emphasis on social justice. As was also noted in Chapter 4, this concept is applied in a number of areas to address issues of poverty, gender, and ethnicity, as well as to include relations between North and South, with future generations, and with the non-human world. However, some further examination is required to understand what the activists meant by social justice. One way of exploring this is by relating their outlook on specific issues to their own position in society.

Having observed that a majority of activists can be located as part of the New Middle Class, a revealing set of responses concerned their attitudes to the notion of class and the distinctive social composition of the Green Party. Some activists sought to reject the applicability of class analysis to green politics even whilst acknowledging that the majority of Party members might be identified as middle class:

> [T]he class struggle doesn't really come into green political analysis .... so we wouldn't look at it hopefully as a class based party, but I think as an outside analysis, as you would say, yes its middle class based.[7]

For the most part the activists, many of whom were aware of the findings of the Rüdig surveys, fully recognised that in terms of education and occupation the Green Party membership had a middle class base:

> [W]e are white, middle class obviously, but then that is possibly because white middle class people have a bit more time, a bit more education, and certainly more money.[8]

> [I]t doesn't have, I don't think a very diverse membership .... [P]art of green politics is finding a way of working with other groupings of people, and maybe of its nature you know the green movement may [end] up with what they say is middle class people who have more leisure time .... more opportunities for access to information and knowledge.[9]

Thus such accounts sought to explain this social base in terms of the resources available to the middle classes such as access to higher education, information, leisure time, and resources.

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7 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
8 Interview with male national activist, 15.11.94.
9 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

Others, whilst admitting that many Greens could be described as middle class, noted that they are not necessarily conventional in terms of their lifestyle or outlook:

> Its a very motley middle class. Its probably not most people's idea of middle class. There are a lot of people having a stab at some kind of self-sufficiency or mixed employment, and people whose background isn't really middle class.[10]

So though in terms of indicators such as social background, education, or occupation most activists could be categorised as middle class, some argued that this analysis neglects the fact that many of them also seek to question or oppose norms and values supposedly dominant in middle class culture, such as deference to authority, the work ethic and the commodification of satisfaction. From this perspective, though undoubtedly having benefited from the material advantages of their social upbringing, the Green Party is seen as including a substantial proportion of members who are seeking an alternative way of life.

Despite the sometimes reluctant recognition of their relatively privileged social position, a majority of activists nevertheless saw green politics as being highly relevant to the poor and other marginalised groups, and sought to frame their policies with this in mind:

> We can't introduce environmentally friendly legislation that hurts the poor.[11]

> I think in the realm of poverty and the working class, poverty, unemployment, things like that, I think our policies are streets ahead of the Labour Party, I mean I'm thinking particularly of the Basic Income Scheme. I mean what have the Labour Party come up with -

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10 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
11 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.

> minimum wage - great if you've got a job. If you sign the GATT agreement which immediately puts out of work tens of thousands of people that is bum's rush isn't it.[12]

However, even though it was argued that the poor and socially marginalised would ultimately benefit from green policies, it was acknowledged that such sections of society were underrepresented in the party.

A number of factors were put forward to explain why the Green Party had not succeeded in reaching out to such groups:

> I worked for a while with .... the families of prisoners who were very much involved in the daily grind and had nothing to spare at all. But if tapped they wrote poetry, they painted pictures, they did all sorts of things. But the concept of greenery was totally beyond them, it was just too difficult to grasp, and this was partly because all of us have been very much conditioned into the kind of social structures, the kind of political structures that we have, and therefore can't think outside them, and to adopt greenery is to think outside that. And its very, very difficult for most people to see, they have to do a very deep change in order to do that. And I think that this is partly the reason that its still very much the middle classes who have gone in for it.[13]

> How it can appeal more widely I honestly don't know .... I think maybe ethnic minorities have got their own issues to deal with at the moment and if they are not particularly concerned with green politics then maybe its not the right time for them. I know that might sound really patronising and awful. I don't know, but when you are talking about appealing to other groups, it sounds a bit marketing-ish, which I am always very suspicious of .... [T]hat doesn't mean you should sit back and do nothing .... but I think all you can do is just try and make sure that what you have got to say is heard by as many people as possible and hope that you'll have a broad enough appeal.[14]

> [Y]eah, not many black people in the party. But I really do not know how we address that issue, I'm really stuck on that one. I have thought about it and I don't know .... why we don't attract these people. Yes, very middle class .... but again, I think part of that isn't green

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12 Interview with male national activist, 15.11.94.
13 Interview with female local and national activist, 2.8.94.
14 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

> politics, I think that is politics in general. I think it attracts the middle class.[15]

Thus it was seen that one of the reasons that the Green Party had not been successful in attracting other groups such as the poor and ethnic minorities was that these groups were facing other more immediate problems. Another factor was the nature of the green message. This was regarded as difficult to grasp due to the complexity of the ideas involved and the requirement to think outside conventional frameworks of existing political discourse. It was also generally accepted that the greens themselves had a tendency of adopting too intellectual an approach in seeking to explain their ideas to others. Finally it was suggested that people could be put off because green politics could be seen as a predominantly middle class activity. There is some truth in the argument that most forms of organised politics tend to be dominated by those from a university educated or middle class background, though in the case of the Green Party a further deterrent could be that it has also acquired an eccentric or counter-cultural image that is not entirely a media invention. It is this singular social and cultural base which undoubtedly affects the Green Party's relationships with other groups and the way in which particular issues are interpreted

It can be seen that there are a number of points of correspondence between the views of Green Party activists and several of the theoretical accounts from Chapter 1 as regards the issue of social justice. Though O'Riordan and Dobson both noted the centrality of social justice to an ecocentric perspective, they did not really explain how groups involved in green politics understood these issues. Gouldner went further towards providing an explanation by

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15 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.

relating the concern with the extension of human rights and social justice within ecological ideologies, to the interests of a New Middle Class who had been socialised into a culture of critical discourse. There are strong parallels between this analysis and the accounts provided by Habermas and Offe. Habermas also emphasised the role of socialisation within a middle class milieu and access to higher education as inculcating a commitment to universal values like equity and social justice. Offe too sees the greens as committed to these universal values, but though this reflects their class background, he notes their portrayal of themselves as representing all sectors of the community, something also highlighted by Gouldner.

Such an analysis is obviously highly applicable to the outlook of Green Party activists. It is clear that they are drawn predominantly from the New Middle Class and have acquired a culture of critical discourse by way of their socialisation and education. However, it is also apparent that their outlook cannot be understood solely in terms of class interests, for this cannot explain why a relatively small fraction of the New Middle Class sought to translate their concerns into a new form of politics or why an ecological perspective should provide the central focus for this. Such an approach also cannot fully account for disagreements over issues of ideology, policy, and strategy within the Party. So though their position can be seen as partly derived from class interests, it also involves the creation of a political identity that seeks to transcend them.

Another way of examining the activists' understanding of these issues is by considering the political genealogy of the concepts involved. Whilst the Green Party's endorsement of equity and social justice can be seen as a continuation of both socialist and liberal

conceptions of these universal values, an additional dimension is provided by emphasising the effect of ecological factors on such rights. Thus the poor are recognised as being worst affected by deteriorating environments, just as on a global scale the North/South divide is accentuated by environmental impacts. A further dimension is related to the Green Party's commitment to defending the rights of marginalised groups from discrimination, as revealed in their opposition to sexism and racism. What is also distinctive about green conceptions of equity and social justice is the perception that ensuring a sustainable society also involves protecting the rights of future generations and finding a means to extend notions of justice to defend the non-human world. However, in seeking to clarify what the greens mean by social justice, as Mellor indicates, a tension can be detected within their discourse between a liberal interpretation of rights based on personal autonomy and a more socialist emphasis on the need for collective action to redress social inequalities.

Some aspects of the Green Party's understanding of issues relating to social justice can be revealed by considering a series of events which took place at their Party Conference in September 1994. The first motion of the Conference, proposed by the Party's Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism Network, aimed to strengthen its policy on racism. This contained four clauses that proved to be contentious. The first of these concerned a proposal for the introduction of a new offence of racially motivated crime. The second clause concerned the right of the black community to define what constituted racism and direct opposition to it. The third clause related to the need to work with other groups and political parties to oppose racism. The fourth clause called for the Green Party to adopt a 'no platform' policy towards racists and fascists.

The level of debate can be indicated by some of the rationalisations used to oppose these proposals. These were: that the creation of a new offence of racially motivated crime would run counter to the Party's existing law and order policy; that the use of the word black was too exclusive; that the Green Party was not a pressure group, but a separate political party so it should not be seeking to influence other political parties or work through other groups; and that a 'no platform' policy not only amounted to an infringement of freedom of speech, but it was also seen as having the potential to deny the Green Party access to some platforms in situations where it might be better to publicly argue against racists. The outcome at the end of the debate was that none of the four clauses were found acceptable and all were voted down.

The proposers of the motion felt that since all the substantive sections had been removed it should be withdrawn. Though a sizeable minority supported them, the majority of delegates overrode their wishes and decided to vote for the policy in its emasculated form. The debate had been confused and though there was obviously general approval that the Party should oppose racism, it was not apparent that there was much understanding of the complexities of the issues involved. In part this could be explained by the fact that there are hardly any Green Party members who belong to ethnic minorities, and that few in the Party seem to have much contact with the black community or the victims of racism.

Paradoxically, at the same Conference, David Icke, a former Speaker of the Party, was denied a platform by the Party's Executive on the grounds that his recent book had made extensive use of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and thus could be seen as endorsing anti-Semitism. Some initial concern was expressed at this decision on

the grounds that it could be seen as an infringement of freedom of speech. On this occasion the Party's Chair made a clear distinction between 'no platform' and freedom of speech in a way that had not been done in the whole anti-racism debate, and once the issues had been explained the decision received general acceptance.[16]

The apparent failure to grasp the issues in the anti-racism debate can revealingly be contrasted with the event that immediately followed it. This was a plenary session which consisted of a panel of representatives from a number of organisations including the Advance Party, Liberty, CND, Shelter, Charter 88, Friends of the Earth, and campaigners against the construction of the M11. The theme was opposition to the forthcoming Criminal Justice Bill. This was an issue which the Conference delegates fully understood and could identify with since a large number of them not only had direct contact with groups targeted by the CJB, but in many cases they were likely to be directly affected themselves. Here, unlike the debate on racism where one of the arguments had been that the Green Party should not seek alliances with other groups, there was a positive endorsement of working together with other groups for a common cause, though in this case the question of co-operating with other political parties did not arise since effectively they had all supported the CJB.

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16 It could be hypothesised that there is a greater sensitivity regarding anti-Semitism in the Green Party since several prominent members happen to be Jewish. However, the move to deny Icke a platform originated with the Party's Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism Network rather than with any of these individuals. Though one factor influencing the ban was that Icke, as a former prominent member, was bringing the Party into disrepute, the main concern of those who raised the issue was to condemn the possible propagation of anti-Semitic ideas. On The Protocols of the Elders of Zion see, N. Cohn, Warrant for Genocide: the Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967. The issue of David Icke's use of anti-Semitic material will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

This indicates that for the majority of activists, their understanding of such issues can be related to their own experiences of social exclusion, which have been largely encountered in terms of issues of political marginalisation and cultural difference, hence their concern with social justice in terms of autonomy, self determination, and tolerance. This is not necessarily the same as a concern with social justice based on an awareness of the material problems experienced by socially and economically disadvantaged groups. There is genuine compassion for the poor and marginalised, as witnessed by the Party's campaigns on homelessness, and by their desire to improve the position of ethnic and minority groups, not only in Britain, but on an international level by seeking to redress the economic imbalance between developed and developing countries. Though the Green Party's good intentions and general commitment to universal values of social justice are not in doubt, translating such principles into practice can pose difficulties when deciding which aspects of such issues will receive prioritisation, especially given the limited resources available. What these two examples illustrate is the extent to which the Party interprets such issues in terms of the existing outlook of the majority of its active members, which results in a concentration on those areas that mesh with their particular concerns, and a comparative neglect of areas in which they have less practical experience.

As will be seen in the discussion of the influences of other political traditions on green ideology in Chapter 6, the worldview of Green Party activists incorporates both socialist and liberal perspectives. This contributes to differing interpretations of what constitutes social justice with one sizeable group, usually including those with a previous involvement in socialist politics, placing a major

emphasis on the need to create an egalitarian society, whilst others, often with a more counter-cultural background, understand these issues predominantly in terms of personal autonomy and defending the rights of minority groups. However, it is only on certain issues, such as the Party's anti-racist policy, that potential conflicts emerge. For the most part these stances are not incompatible and most activists will readily subscribe to the importance of both dimensions of social justice. A similar synthesis of influences drawn from different political traditions is also apparent within the activists' conception of their political alternative, though once again in this they also seek to create a position that is distinctly their own.

III: Green Politics and the State

Another area which can usefully be juxtaposed with the theoretical accounts from Chapter 1 concerns the political outlook of the Green Party activists, particularly regarding their ambivalent attitudes towards the state. Whereas most of the theoretical perspectives acknowledged the centrality of concerns over the need for increased participation and decentralisation, comparatively few addressed the relationship between green politics and the state. Once again it was the sociological approaches which seemed to have most to contribute towards an understanding of the issue. It was Cotgrove and Duff who drew attention to the fact that those articulating environmental concerns tended to be employed in the state controlled sector, suggesting that some of their anxieties and sense of marginalisation could be related to the increased economic restrictions on the provision of public services, a process which has been even further

exacerbated since the time when they undertook their research. Gouldner also emphasised that the New Middle Class strongly supported the welfare state, particularly in the area of the extension of public education, reflecting the high proportion of them whose occupation relied on this sector. Whilst noting that both the New Middle Class and decommodified groups are dependent on the welfare state and seek to defend it from cuts in services resulting from fiscal constraints, Offe has noted that the greens, who tend to be drawn from these strata, also oppose excessive state control in the form of over-regulation. Habermas too has highlighted this aspect in that he sees the New Social Movements, including the greens, as ambivalent about the state, for even whilst they may affirm the importance of its redistributive role, simultaneously they resist the extension of bureaucratic control into the private sphere of the lifeworld.

Habermas also contends that with the decline of the welfare state, the functional role of the New Middle Class is being diminished, which could partly explain their involvement in the New Social Movements. Gouldner is even more explicit about this when he notes that the New Middle Class not only serve dominant interests through their occupational roles, but at the same time they seek to undermine them. He ascribes this to the oversupply of this class through the expansion of higher education, which he sees as resulting in blocked ascendance and a perception of status disparity concerning their role. Consequentially Gouldner regards this class as becoming increasingly alienated and reflexive, one by-product being a high level of political activity aimed at confronting authority, in which their particular set of concerns are presented as representative of the collective interests of society as a whole. Thus all these

perspectives reveal a paradox, for they suggest that whilst the greens tend to be drawn from social strata that are directly or indirectly supported by the state and wish to defend its role in the provision of social and educational services, nevertheless they oppose any extension of bureaucratic authority as undemocratic and restrictive of personal freedom. Yet in questioning the role of the state in some areas, the greens are seemingly acting against their own economic self-interest in that a majority of them depend on it for employment or financial support. This can also be related to green critiques of economic growth, for whilst one aspect of their opposition to this is to prevent market mechanisms intruding into the decommodified sector, at the same a likely short-term outcome of constraining growth would be to limit the source of funding which maintains the current level of state services.

However, it could also be argued that their long-term goal does seek to ensure an adequate level of public services even though it is not immediately clear from the activists' accounts or from Green Party policy, precisely which state services they would wish to maintain and which would be reduced or devolved to local government. Whilst there were a few expressions of strong antipathy to the state, most of those who did seriously address the question readily acknowledged that the administration of green policies would require an expansion of central government in some areas, such as environmental control. Other areas specified as the responsibility of the state included transport, defence, and international policy. There also seemed to be a broad consensus of opposition to the process of cutting public services and the privatisation of public utilities as witnessed by a number of Green Party Conference resolutions on these topics which received more or less unanimous support, suggesting that here too

central government was viewed as an appropriate level to administer such resources. Given the preponderance of Party members employed in education and social services, it was interesting that education and the provision of Citizen's Income were not discussed in this context. This is perhaps because whilst both policies are regarded in terms of universal provision requiring implementation at a national level, they are not seen as being subject to day to day control by the state, thus as with most of their programme the emphasis is placed on how things would work at a local level.

Another factor contributing to the lack of a precise definition of the role of the state on the part of the activists relates to an apparent disjunction between the pragmatic and utopian dimensions of green politics. On the one hand there are the practical attempts to slowly build up support at a local level through elections and campaigns, whilst on the other hand there is a vision of a future society which the Greens would like to move towards with power being devolved to local communities. Much of the Party's strategy remains focused on the first stage whilst its policy looks towards the second stage, with both of these stages being conceived of in local terms. The transition between these two stages in the form of a short-term programme of immediate steps to take on gaining power, and how to move from there towards long-term goals, has not been worked out. This is partly because under current conditions the possibility of a Green government achieving office is regarded as extremely remote. Thus apart from a small number of national activists, few Green Party members have given much serious thought to exactly how they would operate at the level of the state in order to enact policies by means of working through existing centralised administrative structures. This may change as the number of the

Party's elected representatives at different levels increases, and more members gain first hand experience of the practicalities of government. Because this has yet to occur most activists have not had to give a realistic consideration to this intermediate stage, which may partly explain why they have not clearly addressed the role of the state.

In most of their discussions the activists seem to adopt a narrow definition of the state rather than a broad one, conceiving of it as a remote central authority. This is surprising given the proportion of them who have experience of the extended state through their present or former occupational roles as teachers, social workers, health care workers, and civil servants. It is as though they take the positive benefits of the welfare state for granted, whilst focusing their criticism on what are perceived as problems inherent to the system. Perhaps the knowledge gained by way of their occupational experience does contribute to their view of what needs to be changed regarding the way the state operates, but if this is so, what emerges is that they see such issues primarily in terms of autonomy and democratisation. This can be related to their concern that the current practice of representative government is not truly democratic, hence their focus on the need to increase levels of participation, their opposition to hierarchical forms of authority, the requirement that structures should be organised on an appropriate scale, and that society should be decentralised to increase local control and accountability. Such a conceptualisation of the state in terms of issues of autonomy and democracy would seem to confirm those accounts which characterise the greens as left-libertarian in outlook, though their emphasis on personal freedom invariably tends to be balanced by a stress on the importance of social responsibility,

as is apparent from the consideration of the ethical basis of green politics which follows in the next section.

IV: Nature as Value, the Ethic of Responsibility, and the Critique of Instrumental Rationality

As was suggested in section I, although an awareness of the importance of environment or biosphere in sustaining human life could be seen as providing a central reference point of green politics, it was not clear that Green Party activists could be described as ecocentrics or deep ecologists in quite the terms indicated by some political or social theorists. Their discussion of values in Chapter 4 reveals that for the most part the activists do recognise the moral status of nature and accept that it has a right to exist for its own sake beyond its usefulness to humans, being critical of instrumental approaches which would regard it merely as a resource to be exploited. Hence there are parallels with both O'Riordan's and Eckersley's concepts of ecocentrism in that nature is seen as possessing rights which place ethical limits upon human activities, whilst some of the activists could also be seen as subscribing to the deep ecological idea which recognises the intrinsic value of nature, as emphasised by Dobson. Nevertheless, there were also important differences in that such views were often subject to qualification, as with the example of those viruses and diseases seen as constituting a threat to humans, which suggests that for some Greens at least, not all life has the same right to live and blossom, to

adopt the definition used by Naess.[17] As to where they draw the line on this, only one activist expressed his unequivocal support for medical research on animals, but accepted that his was very much a minority position within the Party which went against its adopted policy. In terms of the criteria applied by Eckersley and Dobson the activists cannot be described as either strongly ecocentric or strongly anthropocentric. Though the activists stated the importance of seeing humans as a part of nature, this did not involve a quiescent stance towards it, since it was accepted that they had a contribution to make which was likely to involve active intervention. Neither was nature seen as something static, and as will be seen in Chapter 6 the activists did not envisage returning to some imagined pristine natural state. Given the recognition that humans were in a dominant position in relation to nature, this was seen as entailing a particular responsibility towards it in terms of repairing any damage caused and seeking to create a sustainable society which would minimise impacts upon the environment.

A related factor which requires further consideration concerns the extent to which conceptions of nature based on a particular reading of ecology could be seen as serving an ethical function within green ideology in that it has been observed as providing the basis of a set of values. It was this interpretation of the role of ecology as an influence on green ideology that was emphasised in the theoretical accounts in Chapter 1 above all other factors. Amongst the sociological accounts, Cotgrove and Duff make the argument that for environmentalists nature provides a master value as an alternative to the paradigm of industrial capitalism. They see this as

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17 For his definition of deep ecology see, A. Naess, 'The Shallow and the Deep, Long Range Ecology Movement: A Summary', Inquiry, No. 16, 1973, pp. 95-100.

being related to a critical response to a perceived institutional depoliticisation of value conflicts which are reduced to technical issues. This can be connected to Gouldner's contention that sections of the New Middle Class adopt a reading of ecology to provide the moral basis of a reflexive critique of instrumental rationality. Offe also notes that the New Social Movements, in seeking to articulate universal values in defense of human identity and the environment, oppose the instrumental rationality of bureaucracy and authoritarian control. Habermas identifies a similar trend in that movements defending the lifeworld, including its organic basis in the form of the environment, articulate this in terms of opposition to technocratic forms of domination which have depoliticised public life and stifled debate on a number of vital moral problems. Beck too draws attention to the moral basis of environmental politics as involving a reflexive critique of instrumental rationality, whilst Giddens also emphasises that the ethical dimension of green politics seeks to counter instrumental approaches. Thus each of these accounts highlights the relationship between ecology and an opposition to instrumental forms of rationality as central to the ethical basis of a green worldview.

From a reading of the activist's accounts it would be difficult to substantiate the claim that they look to nature to provide a source of values to counter those of industrial society, though the suggestion that a critical attitude towards instrumental rationality underlies their worldview has some plausibility. Though rarely expressed explicitly, this could be seen as revealing itself in statements to the effect that the environment is not merely something to be dominated or exploited for human benefit. It is similarly apparent in discussions of social relationships where the belief that

nobody has the right to manipulate and control others is seen as fundamental, which can be related to their opposition to centralised, bureaucratic, or hierarchical forms of authority. Another indication of this perspective can be detected in their critique of economic rationalities and large scale technological innovations that proceed without adequate consideration of their long-term consequences, including the moral problems they raise. Also, the activists' insistence on the ethical relationship of means to ends is a further indication of an opposition to instrumental rationality, as is apparent from their attempts to put their beliefs into practice.

As regards the ecological component seen as providing an ethical basis for green politics, most commentators insist that values derived from nature remain human constructs. Though acknowledging that it is possible to have compassion for or solidarity with nature, Habermas firmly denies that this can become an ethic in a normative sense. Beck too has recognised an increasing concern over nature in which it comes to be understood as a source of truth and meaning. Regarding this as a reflection of a moral crisis involving a search for alternative values, he suggests that nature has become the cipher for such sentiments because, whilst it can no longer be seen to have an independent existence due to the extent of human intervention, it remains as a powerful mythical construction. Giddens adopts a similar position to Habermas and Beck by insisting that nature is unable to provide answers to the practical and ethical issues raised by human impacts upon it, but though it cannot be seen as a source of values, he argues that this does not mean that humans do not have a moral responsibility towards the natural world.

Whilst it is not immediately apparent that nature in itself is regarded as a source of values by those involved in green politics,

as indicated by Lowe and Worboys, Enzensberger, and Benton, ecological concepts such as interdependence, balance, and diversity do seem to have a normative currency within green ideology, all being terms which commonly feature in a high proportion of the activists' accounts. Their adoption of these concepts does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of Bookchin's attempt to interpret the science of ecology as an objective source of values. Whilst some activists do show an awareness that values relating to nature are human constructs arising from specific sets of social relations, for the most part activists tend to articulate ecological discourse in a rather taken for granted way, usually to provide a means of social and political analysis rather than as a source of values, though their descriptive, explanatory, or cosmological usage of such terms does also seem to carry underlying moral imperatives. To the extent that Green Party activists do seek to interpret ecological concepts as value laden and include ecological criteria within their social analysis, they do open themselves up to accusations of natural or biological reductionism, as has been suggested by Benton. As was seen in section I, the activists undoubtedly perceive ultimate biological limits in terms of the biosphere, though in discussing this issue they tend to frame it within a debate concerning the logical outcome of the current economic practices of global capitalism. This is seen as inevitably leading to a confrontation with natural limits, resulting in adverse or even catastrophic consequences, whereas societies organised on the basis of seeking a sustainable relationship with the environment are envisaged as operating well within such constraints. Thus it would appear that in the last instance green ideology could be regarded as biologically reductionist, though it also recognises that different forms of social and economic organisation

are likely to vary considerably in how far they impact on perceived limits.

For this reason it is not clear that ecology read as ideology necessarily masks a conservative agenda as implied by Lowe and Worboys who argue that such a view conceives of the solution to the perceived disorder or pathology of the modern world in terms of a return to the traditional values of organic society. Such claims, which are echoed in the Marxist accounts of green politics provided by Enzensberger and Harvey, see ecology as being used to mask class interests, and like Benton they note parallels between attempts to articulate ecological ideas within a green worldview and the incorporation of particular readings of nature characteristic of conservative ideologies. However, this neglects the very different interpretation of nature within these two perspectives. As Friedrich Engels noted in *Dialectics of Nature*, groups tend to project their own interests and preconceptions onto nature.[18] Citing the case of those proponents of social Darwinism who understood evolution in terms of struggle, he saw this as nature interpreted in terms of the social philosophy of Hobbes and Malthus, then read back as though it were proof of some eternal law applicable to human societies. Engels compared such views with those prevalent within some socialist and anarchist circles, which emphasised harmony and co-operation within nature, making the point that both perspectives were one-sided as nature contains examples of both conflict and peaceful co-existence. Whilst this observation highlights the need to be wary of ideological claims based on a reading of nature, it also renders visible aspects of the outlook and agenda of those groups making such claims. So

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18 F. Engels, Dialectics of Nature, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954, p. 404.

whereas conservative readings of nature tend to be used in order to justify competition, hierarchy, and the maintenance of a traditional organic order, the activist accounts demonstrate that their worldview emphasises co-operation and egalitarianism, looking towards the creation of a future sustainable society, rather than advocating a return to the traditional values of an organic society. Though the activists undoubtedly do perceive modern society as being on a self-destructive trajectory, which could be regarded as pathological, their analysis of the factors involved and proposed solutions come closer to a socialist perspective than a conservative one. This issue of the political location of green ideology will be the main focus of Chapter 6.

Such an articulation of ecological discourse cannot be viewed in isolation from other aspects of the worldview of the Green Party activists. When set against their accounts as a whole it can be seen to be one component within a broad package of ideas, which ensures that their understanding of ecological discourse is interpreted in conjunction with a set of social and political values such as equity, social justice, democratic participation, co-operation, freedom, responsibility and tolerance, all of which are more usually associated with socialist, anarchist or liberal perspectives. The addition of an ecological dimension can be seen as contributing to a number of apparent contradictions at the heart of green ideology. Thus the activists wish to extend rights to the non-human world whilst maintaining a humanist stance, they seem to draw on ecology as a source of values even whilst admitting that values are socially constructed, and they conceive of society ultimately being determined by biological limits whilst elsewhere stating their opposition to reductionist forms of thought. The activists do not perceive these

tendencies as necessarily conflicting, but rather as reflecting an attempt to achieve a synthesis which considers the interrelationship of biological and social factors underlying current ecological problems affecting the sustainability of human societies. They see this as requiring a change in attitudes and values concerning the natural world, which necessarily includes re-evaluating conceptions of rights and responsibilities towards the human and non-human world.

This can be related to another potential value conflict within green ideology; that between freedom and responsibility. It was noted in the discussion of social justice in section II that green conceptions of rights could be seen as being composed of both liberal and socialist elements, and as Mellor observed, this could result in tensions between the two positions since concerns over personal autonomy could possibly conflict with more collective notions of rights. Hayward also sought to address this issue by suggesting that the application of an ethic of responsibility, as outlined by Jonas, provides a means to prevent adverse consequences likely to arise from an individualist or liberal notion of rights, by ensuring that the interests of the wider community are considered. The Green Party activists certainly do seem to identify strongly with just such a notion of responsibility, for whilst they are also concerned with autonomy, on the whole this is conceived of in terms of personal freedom or cultural self-expression, rather than in terms of property rights, which liberal conceptions of rights tend to emphasise. Thus as regards social and economic relations, and actions towards the non-human world, a sense of responsibility involving the whole community could be regarded as a core value of a green ideology, whilst motivations such as selfishness and greed were singled out for a unanimous condemnation. However, the imperative of responsibility

as conceived by Jonas could be seen as having conservative overtones in that it is formulated in terms of a critique of technology and its unintended consequences, especially as it recognises the importance of fear as a valid response to a progress which threatens humanity and environment.[19] There are echoes here of Offe's characterisation of green politics as a 'utopia of avoidance', yet he also adopts the language of Weber to portray it as representing an ethic of conviction, in opposition to the ethic of responsibility as embodied in bureaucratic systems of control. This contradiction results from apparently contrasting interpretations of what an ethic of responsibility consists of, and can be clarified by returning to Weber's original formulation of the topic.

It can be argued that the ethic of responsibility proposed by Weber is not incompatible with that outlined by Jonas, though that of the latter is perhaps less comprehensive in that it fails to deal adequately with the relationship of means to ends. According to Weber an ethic of conviction or ultimate ends can be applied to forms of action which are regarded as having moral value and are oriented towards a desired goal. However, he believes that such an approach fails to take account of the unintended consequences of such actions, or blames these on others who have ignored the imperative of 'right' action; thus in Weber's terms it avoids responsibility. On the other hand he insists that an ethic of responsibility must take account of the consequences of actions, whether these are deliberate or unintended, even if this involves adopting instrumental, opportunist,

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19 Indeed Jonas formulates part of his argument as a repudiation of Bloch's Principle of Hope, by equating a critique of technology with a critique of utopia. See H. Jonas, The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1984, especially Chapter 6. Also in the light of the following discussion it is surprising that Jonas does not refer to Weber's ethic of responsibility.

morally dubious, or violent means to achieve a chosen end.[20] In selecting between these two options, given its attempt to imbue its actions with moral value in order to achieve its goal, and its rejection of instrumental or morally dubious means, green politics would seem to conform more closely to the first type rather than the second, as Offe suggests. Yet it cannot be said that green politics seeks to avoid responsibility since one of its major concerns is to draw attention to the unintended consequences of current social and economic practices.

A resolution to this apparent divergence of opinion can be found in Weber's qualifying statement to the effect that, 'an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements', since he envisages that it is possible, or even desirable, for a politics of conviction to encompass both perspectives.[21] Though most greens would be likely to reject Weber's statement that politics must ultimately depend on an instrumental approach and the threat of violence, precisely because they do not accept the separation of means and ends, at the same time they would appear to insist that their position also involves being fully responsible for the consequences one's actions. Thus it could be said that the activists' accounts reveal that those involved in green politics are seeking to combine an ethic of ultimate ends with an ethic of responsibility. This is manifested not only in the value stances they adopt, but also in their attempts to put these beliefs into practice, as can be seen when the issue of lifestyle and politics is considered.

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20 M. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, p. 120.
21 Ibid., p. 127.

V: Lifestyle as Politics

As was seen in Chapter 1, a number of theoretical perspectives drew attention to lifestyle as a component of green politics. However, as in other areas, whilst these studies can be applied to provide insights into some aspects of the lifestyle activities of the Green Party activists, no single account comes close to addressing the full range of practices and meaning involved. The least accurate of all the theoretical perspectives considering this topic was that provided by Goodin, for not only did he misrepresent the content of green lifestyle concerns, but he also failed to recognise that far from being a denial of collective action, such activities can constitute an integral part of political practice. This follows from Goodin's characterisation of lifestyle, which he equates with a particular interpretation of holism, as necessarily involving support for practices he labels as New Age, such as endorsing forms of alternative medicine or advocating pagan spiritualities. Since he regards these beliefs and practices as indicative of a retreat into non-rational or individualistic concerns, he feels able to reject all lifestyle approaches as constituting a denial of collective political action. Goodin is only able to take this line by concentrating on those beliefs and practices he feels able to ridicule whilst ignoring more widespread activities. As far as the Green Party activists are concerned, as was implied in section I, holism can be seen principally to serve them as a form of analysis and was not necessarily interpreted in mystical terms. Though a small number of them do to varying degrees participate in practices which include forms of alternative medicine or paganism,

this can hardly be seen as a requirement for those involved in green politics since a sizeable proportion of activists express no interest in such matters whatsoever and yet still see lifestyle as a central part of their political practice.

Other political theoretical accounts can also be found which adopt a somewhat negative view of lifestyle as a component of politics. In his discussions of green consumerism, deep ecology and green spirituality, Dobson also expresses reservations concerning the effectiveness of the pursuit of lifestyle practices as a feasible political strategy. Leaving aside the issue of consumerism which will be considered below, he does single out the importance of a spiritual dimension of lifestyle as a motivating factor within green politics, having as its focus a reverence for all life and a sense of the oneness of creation. Drawing on the work of Porritt and Bahro, Dobson sees this green spirituality as arising in response to the materialistic and high consumption ethos of modern society, proposing instead a form of asceticism based on frugal living to provide the basis for a metaphysical reconstruction and the spiritualisation of politics.[22] Nevertheless, he believes that approaches which advocate moral or spiritual transformation are likely to lead to a rejection of political action in favour of psychological change. Despite this Dobson acknowledges that lifestyle practices allow an exploration of alternative forms of living as prototypes for a sustainable society, which serves as a means of consciousness raising as well as to open up new sites of conflict.

From the activists' accounts it was clear that there were varying interpretations as to what constituted a green spirituality, for whilst a sense of deep appreciation of nature was widely

22 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought, op. cit., pp. 143-145.

subscribed to, this was often described in aesthetic terms as much as religious ones. Neither were these beliefs universal since some activists stated that for them green politics had no spiritual component at all. Even those who did see a connection between their religious beliefs and their politics cannot be said to have regarded psychological transformation as any kind of substitute for political action, though they did regard it as providing an important motivation. However, Dobson's remarks to the effect that in seeking to counter the consumerist ethos of modern society, green lifestyles can be seen as a form of spiritual asceticism does open up another way of considering this aspect of green politics. In his essay 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', Weber contended that sacred values need not be other-worldly, but can take the form of a rationalised image of the world, often involving a reaction against something regarded as senseless.[23] Seen in these terms the statements of at least some of the activists can be interpreted as responding to an ethical imperative or sense of mission in which abstinence or asceticism offers a path to salvation in this world. This throws a fresh perspective on the ethical regulation of their everyday existence in which by means of their exemplary conduct those involved in such practices are able to act as emissaries for a new way of living. As the subsequent discussion of lifestyle and consumption will reveal, Weber's suggestion that such outlooks are likely to have a status dimension and arise within social strata that regard themselves as repressed or undervalued also has some relevance to the consideration of green lifestyles.

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23 M. Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', in H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, pp. 267-301.

By emphasising lifestyle as a privatised practice Goodin and Dobson do not sufficiently acknowledge that it is also acted out at a public or collective level. Though in the absence of a successful or coherent strategy for achieving their goals, the pursuit of lifestyle concerns gives the activists the sense that they can achieve some of their aims by seeking to put their beliefs into practice in their everyday lives, their attempt to incorporate their values within their practice by relating the ends they wish to achieve to the means adopted to attain them, has implications that go well beyond what might be seen as compensation for lack of political success. By putting their beliefs into practice in this way, the activists are able to heighten their awareness of many of the problems of modern life. Indeed lifestyle practices provide the activists with a means to break down the boundary between the private level and public spheres by heightening their experience of the social, economic and environmental consequences of individual acts, making them aware of what needs to be changed, and allowing them to explore possible alternative solutions to such problems. This can just as easily involve social action as individual responses, particularly as regards those collective practices embodied in the organisation and activities of the Green Party itself. A distinct green political culture can be seen to have evolved which tacitly encourages members to participate in lifestyle practices. This is particularly apparent at Green Party conferences which with their informal atmosphere and variety of stalls and events, often bear a resemblance to a small pop festival once outside the plenary sessions and workshops.

Invariably such events are organised to take account of the sensitivities of the participants. This can vary from using recycled paper for all printed materials to adopting procedures which ensure

that everyone present has a chance to speak and be listened to. Though the Party attracts many people already involved in green lifestyles, and regular contact with other like-minded practicioners is likely to reinforce areas of common concern, there is also a considerable degree of variation in choice as to which aspects of such practices are seen as necessary or important. As was indicated in the activists' accounts, whilst some of them interpret lifestyle concerns as requiring a scrutiny of almost every aspect of their behaviour, by no means all Party members see a need to take such activities to extremes. Most strike a balance by adopting those aspects of lifestyle they see as important or reasonable, and attempting to combine these with other aspects of their lives, which invariably involves some kind of compromise between their beliefs and the practicalities of modern life.

Since not all Green Party members see practicing a green lifestyle as obligatory, and because different choices have been made as to which practices should be emphasised this can lead to potential conflicts. An obvious example of this concerns the provision of food at Green Party conferences. The Party contains a significant proportion of activists who are vegetarians or vegans, and supporters of animal rights. The presence of this group has ensured that catering at Green Party conferences is uniformly vegetarian and vegan in order not to offend their sensibilities, even though there are many activists who eat meat. The result is that at hotels or lodging houses in the morning large numbers of activists will be seen tucking into cooked breakfasts of bacon and sausages, something many of them probably would not normally eat, as though to stock up for the day because they know they will be denied choice at the conference hall. Since the vegetarians and vegans are catered for

but the carnivores are not, it cannot be seen as a matter of providing for all needs, but rather that those who claim the high ground of moral rectitude will be deferred to within the sphere of direct Party influence. Outside the forum of the conference those activists who do not subscribe to the dominant view will feel free to indulge their own preferences. However, such latent conflicts are comparatively rare and this particular issue is an exceptional one. For the most part the activists share a broad pool of common concerns and there is a sense of tolerance towards those whose views are in the minority.

Though there are ways in which the Green Party can be seen as a moral community with elements of a common culture promoting a distinctive set of norms for social life, lifestyle activities cannot be seen as restricted to the cultural sphere since they involve responses to pressures originating in the economic, social, and political systems. One area which must be considered as part of any study of the cultural dimension of lifestyle concerns the issue of the role of consumption in modern societies. As David Chaney has noted in his overview of the sociological literature on the topic, a concern with lifestyle is very much regarded as a response to modernity. This is usually explained in terms of a shift from identities which are based on involvement in the production process towards societies in which consumption is seen as the defining feature affecting the construction of attitudes, values and tastes. From this perspective, in societies already characterised by a fragmentation and privatisation of social life, the growth of segmented markets in commodities and services further encourages differentiation between groups. This process is also seen as leading to an increase in reflexivity amongst participants as new collective identities are

created, and in which personal identity comes to be regarded as a matter of choice between a proliferation of coexisting and overlapping styles. These lifestyles tend to be invested with symbolic meaning, and though they are more likely to be based on secular rather than sacred concerns, nevertheless possess a moral dimension linked to the refinement of sensibilities, as well as providing the basis for social differentiation and status distinctions.[24]

This last aspect has been further explored in the work of Pierre Bourdieu who seeks to explain the social meaning of symbolic value with reference to the metaphor of economic value. He applies this to an examination of the cultural dimension of stratification by noting that differentiation occurs not just through the accumulation of goods, but also through the acquisition of symbolic or cultural capital, which provides knowledge of the means of aesthetic discrimination. He maintains that the manipulation of symbolic or cultural goods is reproduced along the lines of social class, thus reflecting the structures of economic capital. Since Bourdieu regards academic qualifications as a tangible indication of the possession of cultural capital, this can be related to his discussion of the situation of those groups who benefited from the expansion of higher education in the 1960s, who he describes as constituting a new petite bourgeoisie. Making a point that has distinct parallels with Gouldner's analysis, Bourdieu notes that this class have moved into professions such as the media and social work where they occupy an ambiguous occupational position which involves them in maintaining the dominant social order through cultural manipulation, even whilst remaining intellectually sympathetic to discourses which are critical of the existing institutional structure. One consequence of this is an

24 D. Chaney, Lifestyles, London, Routledge, 1996, especially Part 1.

attempt to escape from competition, classification, and hierarchy by inventing a new art of living in the form of alternative lifestyles, which provide them with gratification and prestige at minimal cost. He identifies this class as adopting a vanguard role in a quest for 'ethical salvation' which aims to replace the repressive morality of the declining petite bourgeoisie with a search for self-expression, bodily pleasure, and improved social relations, substituting an imperative of duty with an imperative to have fun. Yet despite their attempts to avoid being categorised in class terms, Bourdieu contends that, 'all their practices ..... speak of classification - but in the mode of denial', becoming merely an inversion of what they are seeking to renounce, or even constituting an attempt at social climbing in a disguised form.[25]

Whilst these perspectives do offer several approaches to an interrogation of green lifestyle concerns, there are also ways in which they do not fully address key aspects of the beliefs and practices of the Green Party activists. Any assumption that their involvement in lifestyle activities indicates that their identity can be regarded as determined within the sphere of consumption rather than that of production remains a questionable one, not least because the activists constantly reiterate the connection between these two spheres as part of their critique of modern society. Though the activists do challenge aspects of the work ethic, especially in the form of production for its own sake, they nevertheless place a high value on meaningful and co-operative work, with many of them choosing occupations that reflect this. At the same time they are highly critical of an ethos that regards consumerism as the defining

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25 P. Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, p. 370.

feature of human existence, since they see societies based on a growth in commodity consumption as unfulfilling, wasteful, and destructive. As will be considered below, ideally they prefer to seek forms of satisfaction which they regard as non-commodified. This said, their everyday practices, including attempts to live a green lifestyle, necessarily involves a material dimension in which choices are made concerning a range of goods and services. In seeking to practice a green lifestyle such choices between commodities will be governed by a set of economic, social, ethical, and environmental criteria, to encourage those which are seen as beneficial or having the least impact. Whilst the activists would be the first to admit that not only is it almost impossible in practical terms to live a truly green lifestyle, but also that forms of green consumerism and activities such as recycling various materials are in themselves hardly likely to bring about significant change, they nevertheless continue to involve themselves in such practices. This goes beyond wishing to be seen to practice what they preach, to touch on deeper aspects of their culture and identity.

As has been suggested the predominant cultural style amongst the Green Party activists is one which echoes the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s which provided a formative influence on the outlook of a significant proportion of them. In this sense their appearance, behaviour, and tastes do provide visible signs of their identity and group membership, which can be seen as carrying symbolic meaning and representing a distinct ethical stance. The development of such a cultural style can be interpreted as involving a status dimension in a Weberian sense, for not only does it differentiate them from other groups, but also in the sense that they wish to exclude certain categories of goods from the market. To

adapt Thorstein Veblen's phraseology they are characterised by what could be described as a form of conspicuous non-consumption.[26] Such an analysis cannot be taken too far since it should be emphasised that many Green Party members display little or no evidence of this particular cultural style, and some are even openly critical of it. Also as a political party the Green Party must retain a degree of openness so as not to exclude potential members from whatever social background or lifestyle affiliation.

However, given that the majority of members are drawn from a distinct social group, that is those who have received a university education, this does raise the question of whether the lifestyle dimension of green politics constitutes a form of cultural distinction as a reading of Bourdieu might suggest. In his terms the activists might be described as an ethical vanguard in that moral criteria have determined their choice of occupation and their political affiliation. Also, as was seen in section II, they do seek to avoid being defined in terms of class even whilst recognising that a high proportion of members could be classified as belonging to a recognisable class fraction. Yet Bourdieu's dismissal of the exploration of alternative lifestyles as a disguised form of social climbing resulting from frustrated ambition, and as merely indicating an inversion of a rejected middle class morality, is a one-sided analysis. Whilst the activities of such groups may well reproduce middle class mores, reflecting the class background from which participants have emerged, and though some of those involved may be seeking fulfilment in alternative lifestyles because success in more conventional avenues have not been available to them, this cannot

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26 T. Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class, New York, Mentor Books, 1953.

simply be ascribed to infantile rebellion or a search for compensation as Bourdieu implies. Though the usefulness of his emphasis on the cultural dimension of class analysis is not in doubt, at the same time it neglects other interpretations of the motivations and actions of groups involved in such activities. As Scott Lash has suggested, Bourdieu is more interested in reproduction than social change, and as a consequence his work needs to be revised in order to account for the creation of new social collectivities and forms of action.[27] Thus groups involved in lifestyle practices also could be considered in terms of attempts at social innovation in response to changing structural conditions. This is a point that is brought out in many of the sociological perspectives which identify lifestyle as an important component of green politics.

For Habermas the defence of threatened lifestyles and the creation of new ones can be viewed as a consequence of systemic change, resulting from an expanding colonisation of the lifeworld by economic and bureaucratic forces. He believes that in reaction to such threats, the rationalisation of the lifeworld will encourage critical and reflexive attitudes which will lead to satisfaction being sought through improving the quality of mutual social relations rather than through increases in material accumulation. Similarly Beck emphasises that the rise of sub-politics in response to the increases in risk symptomatic of the process of reflexive modernisation, will involve the creation of new identities, practices, and norms, which relate to aspirations of how life should be lived. Giddens adopts an almost identical position by identifying a concern with life politics as a symptom of the effects of globalisation. He

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27 S. Lash, 'Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Economy and Social Change', in C. Calhoun et al. (eds.), Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives, Cambridge, Polity, 1993, pp. 193-211.

sees a combination of modern institutional practices, mass communications, and an acceleration of global economic competition, as resulting in the destruction of local and traditional identities along with the environment. Giddens argues that the manufacture of risk and uncertainty manifests itself in a moral crisis characterised by a reflexive search for self identity. He believes that life politics with its emphasis on lifestyle change will help resolve environmental problems by replacing the desire for material accumulation with that for self-actualisation. In this Giddens not only relates personal actions to global consequences, but also suggests that such practices can provide a means of transition to an alternative way of life by fostering new types of solidarity and creating new public arenas for dialogic forms of democracy.

If the Green Party activists' concerns over lifestyle are considered in the light of their discussions of economics and politics, their involvement in alternative practices could be seen as part of an attempt to defend the lifeworld from the encroachment of economic and bureaucratic forms of control as well as from physical threats to human health and the environment, as Habermas suggests. All three theorists note that green politics identifies the instrumental rationalities which inform the economic, political, and technical spheres as the principal source of many of the problems of modern societies, hence its attempt to counter this process by a prioritisation of ethical criteria. Beck and Giddens in particular account for increases in reflexivity as a response to a society characterised by the pervasiveness of risk, which they see as resulting in a sense of crisis which takes on an overwhelmingly moral character. From this view almost every individual act is undertaken in the face of countless potential threats, physical and moral, so experimentation

with alternative lifestyles is understood as part of a strategy of risk avoidance. Both Beck and Giddens tend to describe this process as generated by fear, or at least profound anxiety, and as taking the form of a retreat into private life as part of a preoccupation with a search for self-identity.

There are ways in which the activists' lifestyle activities can be seen in these terms, such as through their concerns over diet, health, resource use, and personal relationships. Their awareness of risk has encouraged reflexivity, but this goes beyond scrutinising impacts on their own lives to inform a critique of society as a whole. Admittedly Beck and Giddens do recognise that lifestyle, by politicising everyday life, and by connecting individual and local concerns to global consequences, can form the basis of a new form of politics, but it is a weakness of their account that they do not specify which agents are likely to bring about the social transformation they envisage, or what strategies might be required to convert individual concerns into a collective force to implement change. Habermas does addresses this issue in that he acknowledges that not only do structural conditions generate the problems in question, but they also bring about the formation of groups, such as the New Middle Class, whose situation encourages them to formulate collective responses to such concerns.

Though all three theorists stress the importance of lifestyle concerns as a response to structural change, at the same time they are all highly critical of green politics, which, for a similar set of reasons they wish to portray as backward looking or seeking some kind of return to nature. Yet as the accounts of the Green Party activists demonstrate, far from attempting to recreate some imagined traditional way of life, their beliefs and practices actually embody

many of the innovations and challenges to existing norms which Habermas, Beck, and Giddens themselves favour. So whereas Habermas portrays most New Social Movements, including the greens as defensive in character, this neglects the emancipatory aspects of their attempts to formulate alternative practices. This is apparent in the activists' conceptualisation of lifestyle practices, which in rejecting commodified and hierarchical social relations, advocate a focus on the quality of interpersonal relationships by encouraging self-actualisation, communal activities, and the democratisation of all areas of social life. It may be that their attempts to organise and rationalise these activities has not reached the stage where they could be seen as embodying the ideal form of communicative rationality that Habermas anticipates, but such practices undoubtedly provide a means to foster critical and reflexive outlooks amongst those involved. In a similar way the activists' lifestyle practices could be seen as incorporating a search for new solidarities and the creation of new public arenas for the practice of dialogic democracy, themes identified by Giddens as necessary for the development of life politics, though most greens would see these as inseparable from a more general politics of emancipation.

Of all the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 1, it is that of Hayward who provides the most positive evaluation of lifestyle as a component of green politics. He detects considerable potential in the green movement's support for alternative and anticipatory practices involving new forms of production and exchange, new autonomous public spaces, and new avenues of resistance. For Hayward this constitutes a redefinition of the political sphere by the politicisation of everyday life and the extension of notions of discursive democracy to consider relationships with the non-human

world. The activists' accounts would seem to corroborate Hayward's description of green explorations of alternative forms of social and economic activities as representing anticipatory practices. This is particularly apparent in their discussions of work and social relations. When questioned about both what they would most like to change in their own lives and the form a future green society might take, these were the issues which invariably came to the fore. Though the activists had tended to seek careers in areas that they thought to be socially worthwhile, a large proportion of those in formal employment expressed dissatisfaction with their job, whilst others had changed careers, often withdrawing from full-time work in favour of part-time work which gave them more time flexibility, even when this meant a considerable reduction in income. When describing work in a future society they emphasised a similar set of qualities; that it should be socially worthwhile, with production based on need, that it should be co-operative and community based, as well as being flexible enough to allow people to structure their lives to find fulfilment both in work and in outside activities. Certainly the activists wished to question the whole meaning of employment, rejecting an ethos of work for its own sake in favour of its re-evaluation in terms of criteria of need, usefulness, and fulfilment. There is a suggestion here that the activists are displaying a sense of alienation in response to a perceived deterioration of social relations at work, and in society at large, resulting from economic forces which have been unleashed without consideration of the human or environmental consequences. Indeed the activists look to alternative forms of satisfaction, which are largely envisaged in terms of improving the quality of their social relationships, whether at work, in the community in which they live, or in their personal lives.

In response to questions concerning what they see as the purpose of life, their answers were most frequently expressed in terms of a need to redress the perceived lack of joy, celebration, and conviviality in modern society.

In this respect there are some striking parallels between the outlook of the activists on these issues and Herbert Marcuse's analysis of modern capitalist societies. Not only do they express a similar critique of the social impacts of modern forms of production and consumption as ultimately destructive towards humans and nature, but they also envisage solutions which require a qualitative transformation of needs. Seen in these terms, for the Green Party activists their lifestyle practices are bound up with their critique of modern societies, and as such could be regarded as part of an attempt to liberate themselves from compensatory, repressive, or destructive needs by seeking new forms of creativity and fulfilment. Thus involvement in lifestyle activities, far from being a denial of collective political action, can be interpreted as serving a number of important roles within a green political practice. These range from educating participants concerning the problems of modern life which acts as a form of consciousness raising, promoting new forms of solidarity by means of experimentation with different social practices, serving to demonstrate that alternatives are possible through what might be described as an exemplary moral project, and allowing those involved to live out their expectations of what form a future society might take as a kind of anticipatory practice. Whilst the activists are under no illusions that engaging in such practices will in themselves bring about significant change, they are undertaken in combination with other political activities which adopt more

conventional means to challenge existing political and economic structures and move society towards a new set of goals.

Conclusion

By relating the activists' accounts of green politics to the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter 1, it can be seen that though these are often able to provide insights in some areas, as descriptions or explanations they remain incomplete. This is because most approaches tend to concentrate on a few selected facets of green politics rather than seeking a more complete picture, a problem often compounded by a preoccupation with particular set of theoretical preconceptions, and a reliance on inadequate source material.

Thus by concentrating on the philosophical issue of ecocentrism, most theoretical attempts to describe and categorise green politics are too far removed from the actual beliefs and practices of those involved to be directly applicable. Though the activists do recognise the intrinsic value of nature, they do not wholly conform to the notion of ecocentrism as proposed by O'Riordan, Eckersley, and Dobson. Out of these accounts Dobson comes closest to providing a general description of the elements combining to make up a green worldview. Though he states in the revised edition of *Green Political Thought* that his work should be regarded as constituting an ideal type which does not necessarily conform to the outlook of specific movements or parties, his account is remarkably accurate in matching the range of concerns identified

by the Green Party activists in Chapter 4.[28] However, Dobson's account is less strong when it comes to be applied to particular areas of concern. His argument classifying green parties as environmentalist cannot be sustained since in outlook the activists come closer to his notion of ecologism. Yet at the same time there are continuities of outlook between Green Party members and environmental groups, which undermines his attempt to suggest that ecologism is incompatible with environmentalism.

In other areas Dobson does show an awareness of the economic, social, and political dimensions of green politics, though it might be said he under-emphasises the importance attached to values such as social justice and responsibility. As regards lifestyle, he tends to discuss this as an individualistic practice, but his account does go beyond the narrow and selective interpretation of this issue provided by Goodin. Though Dobson does not sufficiently acknowledge that lifestyle can be an integral part of collective political action, he does recognise its ability to explore new forms of experience and its potential for consciousness raising. So whilst Dobson's work provides a comprehensive general description of the package of concerns contributing to a green ideology, his approach is less able to analyse how the different elements of green politics are understood by those involved, or to explain why these particular concerns have been combined to form of a distinct political worldview.

In this respect it was the sociological approaches which showed themselves to be more able to provide insights into the content, form, and meanings attached to various aspects of green politics by relating these to the structural factors affecting those involved. By

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28 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought (Second Edition), 1995, op. cit., p. 4.

identifying core areas of concern associated with green politics with the educational background and occupational position of the New Middle Class and other decommodified groups, Cotgrove and Duff, Gouldner, Offe, and Habermas, all go some way towards explaining the outlook revealed in the accounts of the Green Party activists, the majority of whom were highly educated, with a significant proportion employed in or dependent upon the public sector. On these grounds the activists' economic concerns can be partly attributed to their marginalisation from the 'productive' sector of the economy, taking the form of an opposition to free market capitalism, commodification, and economic growth, all of which are seen as destructive towards human needs and the environment. Hence their social location can be seen as influencing their search for autonomy from business and political interests, their rejection of what they see as the domination of economic over moral concerns, and their focus on improving the quality of life rather than seeing solutions in terms of quantity.

These sociological perspectives are also able to account for aspects of the activists' social concerns in that Gouldner, Offe, and Habermas all recognise a tendency amongst movements with a New Middle Class base, to portray themselves as representative of all sectors of society rather than particular interests. This reveals itself in the activists' commitment to universal values such as equity, social justice, and human rights, which are not just restricted to their own society, but applied on an international or global level. Another area where the sociological perspectives are able to contribute insights concerns the attitudes towards the state held by those involved in green politics. Whilst Cotgrove and Duff, and Gouldner note that groups drawn from those employed by the state sector, or having been in receipt of higher education are likely to

exhibit strong support for the welfare state, Offe and Habermas both draw attention to a trend within green politics towards criticism of excessive bureaucracy and state intrusion into the private sphere. This is highly applicable to the ambivalent stance concerning the state on the part of the activists, hence their emphasis on autonomy in terms of opening up democratic forms of participation. Some sociological perspectives have also offered an explanation of the link between green politics and a concern with lifestyle practices. Habermas sees this as a response to an intensification of the commodification and bureaucratisation of the lifeworld, which he sees as encouraging a reflexive search for alternative forms of satisfaction which focus on improving the quality of social relations rather than accepting the assumption that gratification can be found through increases in material accumulation, themes echoed in the work of both Beck and Giddens.

One area where the sociological accounts seemed to offer little in the way of detailed discussion was in regard to the ethical basis of green politics, despite a general recognition of the importance those involved placed on the moral dimension. In part this can be connected to a problem with all the theoretical perspectives, in that none of them can provide a wholly satisfactory explanation of the role ecology plays as a focus for this new form of politics, and why this issue had a particular appeal for participants drawn from the New Middle Class and other decommodified groups. On the first issue one interpretation which seems to come close to the activists' understanding is that of Eyerman and Jamison, with their argument that ecology is able to serve a cosmological function by offering a framework for holistic forms of analysis. Less convincing is Gouldner's suggestion that ecology can be used to promote group

solidarity and to make strategic appeals to potential supporters. Alternatively he observes that ecology can be interpreted as providing the basis for a moral critique of instrumental rationality, an issue also alluded to by Beck and Giddens, though they attribute the reflexive critique of instrumental rationality characteristic of ecological politics as a response to increases in risk. Habermas prefers to emphasise the reality of the environmental crisis which has been produced by the current economic and political system, which he sees as one of the most crucial problems of the age, thus recognising green politics as a direct response to threats to the organic basis of the lifeworld. Though taken together these accounts go some way towards explaining why the environment became the focus for a new form of politics, and what role ecology serves within a green worldview, they do not address the issue of the relationship of means and ends, which remains a central one for the activists. Several of these accounts are also problematic because of their understanding of how nature is conceptualised within green politics. This is particularly the case with Habermas, Beck, and Giddens who all declare that since nature is unable to provide a source of values, any attempt to invoke nature as part of a political practice can be regarded as an indication of non-rational, mystical, escapist, romantic, or backward-looking tendencies.

This portrayal is paralleled in many of the theoretical perspectives concerned with the political location of green ideology. For example Lowe and Worboys, Enzensberger, and Harvey all suggest that the evocation of ecological limits or interpreting ecological themes as moral imperatives are symptomatic of a conservative or authoritarian outlooks. This ignores the actual social and political content of green politics, misrepresenting the stance adopted by

those involved, for though aspects of the activists' outlook could be seen as involving elements of biological determinism, they cannot be characterised as conservative in outlook. In this respect Benton's contribution to the debate is more applicable because whilst warning of the problems of conceiving of limits in terms of the biosphere, or the use of normative interpretation of ecological concepts applied to social issues, as indicative of the natural reductionism characteristic of an 'epistemic conservatism', he recognises that green politics need not take a conservative form. Thus he observes that the kind of future society envisaged by green politics is not incompatible with socialist perspectives. This interpretation is supported by the activists' accounts for though they do subscribe to the notion of limits, this is combined with a critique of global capitalism, and encompasses the idea that it is possible to create a sustainable society able to meet human needs. Thus they recognise that different forms of social and economic organisation will result in considerable variations in environmental impact. Also though they are prone to using ecological terms in ways that imply underlying moral imperatives, they combine these with value positions more usually associated with socialist or anarchist perspectives.

This is not to say that contradictions do not arise regarding the interpretation of such values, hence the applicability of Mellor's observation that tensions exist within green conceptions of social justice, between rights understood in terms of collective action, and a predisposition to interpret rights in terms of personal autonomy, a trend that is certainly apparent in the outlook of the Green Party activists. Hayward also makes an important contribution to this debate by recognising that a possible resolution to some of these tensions can be found by considering an ethic of responsibility as a

core value of green politics, that in some respects takes precedence over the discourse of rights. Though his discussion of this issue is conducted in philosophical terms, the points he raises do correspond with the activists' emphasis on the centrality of the notion of responsibility. Hayward's discussion can further be related to the activists' critique of instrumental rationality and the need to account for the wider consequences of actions as witnessed by their insistence on the inseparability of means and ends. This connects to the activists' attempts to put their beliefs into practice in their daily lives as an integral part of their political outlook. Of all the theoretical perspectives, Hayward offered the most positive evaluation of the lifestyle component of green politics, recognising the potential of such anticipatory practices to create new solidarities, new public spaces, and new avenues of resistance, by the politicisation of everyday life.

Taking all these theoretical perspectives together it is possible to construct a description and partial explanation which can be applied to most of the main areas of concern of green politics. By relating these concerns to social and structural factors the sociological perspectives, particularly those of Offe and Habermas, provide the greatest depth of insight. Though the theoretical perspectives are to some extent corroborated by the activists' accounts, these also reveal many inadequacies which can largely be ascribed to a reliance on unrepresentative source material. By exploring the theoretical portrayals of green ideology in the light of the activists' accounts it is possible to resolve some of the tensions within and between the theories which can be shown to be based on misconceptions of what greens actually believe and practice. This is particularly apparent as regards theoretical attempts to analyse the

connection between green politics and conceptions of environment, ecology, or nature. By misrepresenting the stances that those involved actually do take on these issues, led to interpretations portraying green politics as backward looking or conservative in outlook. Such an interpretation cannot be substantiated by the activists' accounts on these issues, or by a consideration of their worldview as a whole. In order to further explore this question of the political location of green ideology, the next chapter will consider how the activists understand green politics in relation to other political traditions, how they respond to criticisms that suggest that they are implicitly authoritarian or backward looking, and where they situate themselves in relation to the left-right political spectrum.

CHAPTER 6

THE POLITICAL LOCATION OF GREEN IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Following the overview of the content of the worldview of the Green Party activists and the consideration of some of the main themes which emerged in the context of theoretical debates applicable to green politics, this Chapter will focus on the political location of green ideology. Again this will proceed from an interrogation of the activists' accounts in relation to theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter 1. Section I will explore possible continuities and discontinuities between green politics and other political philosophies, past and present, as revealed in the interview material. As well as considering the relations between green politics and socialism, anarchism, liberalism, conservatism, and feminism, there will also be an evaluation of the activists' critique of capitalism as one of the defining features of their outlook. The issues raised by this discussion are relevant to a number of common criticisms against green politics levelled by commentators from both left and right, including charges that its outlook contains elements which show parallels with aspects of fascist ideology, particularly in relation to claims that it is implicitly authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban, and desires a return to some kind of rural idyll or state of nature. The assumptions underlying these arguments will be examined in section II, along with the evidence for and against such charges, including the responses of the activists to such accusations. Section

III will focus on where green politics stands in relation to the left-right political spectrum. It will be seen that the activists themselves are divided on this issue, with some arguing that it is situated on the left, whilst others contend that it cannot be placed on the spectrum at all, being entirely distinct from this kind of classification.

In exploring these different aspects this Chapter aims to demonstrate that whilst green politics has consciously drawn upon selected elements associated with a range of existing political philosophies, it has simultaneously defined itself in terms of opposition to other tenets fundamental to most of these outlooks. As in earlier Chapters it will also be suggested that most critics of green politics have based their arguments on unrepresentative sources or on an oversimplified analysis of positions that those involved actually do take, resulting in the perpetuation of a number of stereotypes which cannot be sustained when applied to the outlook of Green Party members. However, given that the discourse of the activists encompasses elements of both Enlightenment thought and a Romantic critique of modernity, this has resulted in sufficient ambiguities to leave considerable scope for misinterpretation. Nevertheless it will be argued that given their commitment to progressive and humanist values, combined with their future orientation, the activists' cannot be regarded as representing an authoritarian, restrictive, or backward looking perspective as many of the theoretical accounts imply. Though green politics incorporates elements from existing political philosophies, it does so within a package ordered around a new set of concerns which could be seen as constituting a distinct ideology which seeks to transcend existing positions. So whilst the activists' accounts indicate that green

politics has greater affinities with the politics of the left than that of the right, which would locate it towards the left of the political spectrum, at the same time its intention is to take society in an entirely new direction.

I: Continuities and Discontinuities With Other Political Philosophies

As part of the interviews undertaken with Green Party activists, one area explored was that of how they saw the relationship between green politics and other political philosophies, past and present. Their initial reaction to the questions on this topic tended to be a statement to the effect that green politics was something new and distinct, quite different from the positions adopted by other contemporary political parties, but at the same time they were aware that their outlook had been influenced by elements drawn from all the main political traditions. This can be illustrated by statements such as:

> It is distinct from all established political philosophies, but I suppose it does have little points of contact. In a way there's little threads of conservatism in it, old fashioned conservatism .... in the sense that some things about tradition and continuity are very valuable .... I wouldn't say it has much in tune with liberalism, with sort of neo-liberalism .... I don't see that as particularly green .... I suppose with the left, there are points of contact .... but it seems to me it has got too bogged down in .... this whole centralised model, and the role of the state just being too huge.[1]

> I think it has to be influenced by past philosophies because it hasn't come absolutely, totally fresh from nothing .... In terms of its compatibility with some, I mean in many respects it has more compatibility with an old style socialist tradition than anything else .... I mean

1 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

> there are other parts where you can look at it and pull out bits. Obviously the aspects of individual responsibility are very strong, obviously [in] anarchism, within conservatism too, certain strands of conservatism, certain strands of liberal arguments.[2]

These responses make the point that whereas they accept that green politics may have incorporated some aspects drawn from other political philosophies, at the same time there are elements of these which they regard as incompatible with it. Such statements also make it clear that the activists placed different interpretations on which aspects of these other traditions have been most influential.

As it might be expected, discussions in this area tended to be coloured by each activist's political socialisation and preferences, especially as regards the issue of whether some political philosophies are more compatible with green politics than others. However, even when this is taken into account they can be seen to remain relatively open to the influence of traditions with which they are not particularly sympathetic. For example here are the views of two activists who voted Conservative prior to joining the Green Party:

> [T]he Green Party was born out of a need for something to challenge the political orthodoxy in total, I think particularly as far as economics are concerned. It's the political orthodoxy, whether you put [a] socialist, capitalist, Labour, Tory [or] Liberal tag to it, [which] is founded on the economic philosophy - more is better - by definition. And that the goal of society is to create more and therefore everyone is going to be happy as a result .... I suppose that view means that I vigorously resist attempts to say that the Green Party is left or more socialist or more whatever. There's a lot of elements in it that are conservative with a small c, preserving the best [of] what we've got now .... where its compatible with an ecological future, but also changing because the world is changing very quickly .... [Y]ou have got to be able to adapt as well, you cannot just cling on to things for the sake of it because it's the way it's always been done. It could be argued it's socialist in terms of equity and things, but then it's a much broader definition of that. It's about individual

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2 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

> opportunity which the Conservatives say they are for, but its also about community in a more localised way than perhaps the Labour Party would look at it .... [T]here's no totally new solution to anything. Bits of other political philosophies are in the green political philosophy, but it was born out of a need for something rather different and hopefully what it is going to do will be not to reject outright everything anyone else says, but to look at whether other peoples' solutions actually will fit with an ecological future.[3]

> It's influenced by them all really .... conservatism from the point of view of conservation .... socialism is obviously a very active component because many of the social justice issues we are espousing and have policies for, have been the property of socialist experiments .... [I]t depends what you define as liberalism .... certainly the Green Party individually and collectively, it's a paradox, but I mean whilst it's restrictive in certain forms of behaviour, largely speaking it's a fairly libertarian sort of party in that most people are allowed to be what they are .... Anarchism is still an element within the party .... there certainly is a tradition of agrarian, radical, anarchic, political thought .... I don't think any of them are actually dominant. I think there is a greater socialist input and anarchist input maybe than a liberal or conservative input, but the idea is that all these different influences are brewing a new politics. And you are hopefully taking the best elements of those .... rather than being stuck with the baggage. But I do essentially see green politics as moving a stage beyond the old dichotomies of organised capital and organised labour, because we are moving beyond a purely industrial economic analysis.[4]

What they both wish to emphasise is that green politics is something new that transcends existing economic and political orthodoxies. They are quite prepared to accept that there have been influences from a variety of sources, without regarding any of these as dominant, though they do differ in that the first speaker wishes to categorically deny that the Party can be seen as influenced more by the left, whereas the second speaker recognises that socialist and anarchist ideas may have had a greater influence than liberal and conservative strands amongst their fellow activists.

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3 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
4 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

These views can be juxtaposed with those held by activists who could be seen as representing the left of the Party:

> In terms of popular conceptions of modern political philosophies, and the discourse of modern political parties, I don't think it has any coincidence. So obviously Labourism, Conservatism, and Liberalism really doesn't coincide with our aspirations .... [E]ven .... anarchism and Marxism have in general been quite productivist. I think in terms of its prehistory there are obviously important strains within anarchism and British popular socialism .... And of course you have then got strands within critical conservatism.[5]

> [M]y starting point is the anarchist, socialist, and of course feminist [strands] .... with anarchism which is probably the strongest, although again I think I have got a strong socialist [outlook] .... but not [in a] state form. I think theres a lot in anarchist writings that I've come across that are very much what I'd see as green politics, because they are also looking at structure and they are really looking at sort of every aspect of life. I also think theres so much within .... earlier writings around socialism, which .... I've read and thought why isn't the Labour Party like this? Because they aren't are they? And I remember reading about the .... Labour Party in the early 1900s and thinking; God, is this what socialism was, I mean liberal socialism, democratic socialism, whatever it was then. I think there's a lot there. I also think surprisingly, as I have read some writings of conservatives and really as I suspected there is .... actually quite a lot of common ground in some areas, but generally I've been more [oriented towards] feminism, socialism and anarchism.[6]

Once again, whilst rejecting any links between green politics and other contemporary political parties, both speakers acknowledge parallels with aspects of the historical traditions which inform them, particularly in the cases of socialism, anarchism, and for the last speaker feminism. Also, somewhat surprisingly, they identify currents within conservative thought that resonate with green concerns.

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5 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.
6 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

As was seen in Chapter 1, a number of the theoretical perspectives noted parallels and divergences between green politics and other political philosophies. Generally such portrayals took the form of a critique seeking to demonstrate supposedly undesirable aspects of green politics or its inability to satisfactorily address certain issues. Few of these perspectives acknowledged the range of influences at work, or seriously examined which elements of particular philosophies were compatible with green politics and which were not. Only Dobson's account came close to achieving this, though he placed his main emphasis on debates with socialism and feminism, with much less discussion of anarchism and conservatism, and only passing references to liberalism. Hayward ran him a close second in terms of breadth of discussion and often surpassed him in terms of the depth of his consideration of parallels with socialist, anarchist, liberal, and feminist thought, though he did not directly address possible conservative dimensions. Most theoretical accounts which explored relations between green politics and other perspectives restricted their discussions to one or two political traditions. Many such portrayals also involved attempts to appropriate aspects of the green agenda to their own preferred perspective whilst simultaneously characterising green politics as revealing tendencies towards some diametrically opposed position.

The issue of different interpretations of the relation between green politics and the left-right political spectrum, and whether this can be related to the political socialisation of the activists concerned will be addressed in section III below. The rest of this section provides an examination of how the activists understand the relationship of green politics to a full range of other political

ideologies beginning with a consideration of their opinions as regards the socialist tradition and the contemporary Labour Party.

Socialism

As regards the relationship between green politics and other philosophies over three quarters of the activists cited socialism as an influence, which was a greater acknowledgement than any other political outlook received. The activists interpreted socialism primarily in terms of equity and social justice, but it was also understood as involving the provision of social welfare, the redistribution of wealth, and the protection of human rights. Several of the activists also acknowledged the usefulness of Marxist forms of analysis in providing the basis for an understanding of capitalism as a global system, as well as offering concepts such as surplus value, alienation, and commodity fetishism, all of which were seen as highly relevant to green politics. This can be detected in statements such as:

> Although we might use different terms, the basic Marxist critique of capitalism is something that most contemporary greens would share .... [Marx's] basic critique of big business and surplus value is as true today as it was then.[7]

> My personal belief .... is that the most important strand is the socialist one, the idea of working collectively, you know, from each according to their ability, unto each according to their need. And that is a principle that works just as well for ecology as it does for people. And I think that's the dominant strand. Where we differ I think from mainstream socialism .... is that we have accepted the liberal concept that individual freedom is important, and that while people must act together we must respect individual beliefs and people's right to be different, so long as it does not upset things totally for everyone else.[8]

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7 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.
8 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.

Marxist or socialist perspectives can be seen to have informed the anti-capitalist dimension of green politics, as will be further considered below. Aspects of Marx's vision of the form a future society might take could also be regarded as influential for several of the activists who cited a paraphrase of his well known statement, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs', seeing this as easily applicable to social relations in an ideal green community.[9] However, those who did invoke a Marxist perspective invariably qualified this by rejecting what were perceived as authoritarian or coercive trends associated with Soviet state socialist regimes.

Some of the activists also referred to the influence of other strands of the socialist tradition:

> Early Utopian Socialists have a lot in common with greens .... certainly in terms of the social structures the kind of social revolution we want to create. The difference was that they didn't really have an ecological imperative.[10]

> When modern socialism started in Britain one of the largest majority currents of it was a green current, and of course the SDF which was the first Marxist group was heavily influenced by Morris .... Morris very much believed in all the things that modern greens believe in. And of course you've got people like Edward Carpenter who were immensely influential .... obviously animal rights was very important, and spirituality, and holism, and sexual freedom, and criticism of technology.[11]

Apart from general references to early socialism or utopian socialism, several specific groups or figures were cited as influential, including the Diggers and Levellers, Robert Owen, Edward Carpenter, and

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9 See, K. Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme, in D. McLellan (ed.), Karl Marx: Selected Writings, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 569.
10 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.
11 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

William Morris. Morris was mentioned more than any other comparable figure in this respect, with four of the activists in particular citing both *News From Nowhere* and his other political writings as significant influences on their political outlook, making the point that he addressed many of the central concerns of green politics.

Such an affinity with historical forms of socialist thought or values embodied within its philosophy did not extend to contemporary forms of socialist practice. One small group (five) mostly consisting of people from a conservative background, were strongly anti-socialist, in that they associated it with authoritarian or bureaucratic forms of government as represented by Soviet type systems. Even those sympathetic to aspects of socialism felt that the Labour movement had diverged from some of its earlier concerns and come to identify too strongly with perpetuating the current industrial system. Another small group (four) had some involvement in various red-green initiatives aiming to build links with groups on the left, as indicated by statements such as:

> [T]he red-green split .... I'm much less conscious of that in the circles in which I move. I feel that both points of view are valid. I, as a former member of the Labour Party I suppose I have sympathies with the red element of that split, but I feel myself to be very much a green as well .... I'm certainly not concentrating on social justice to the exclusion of protection of the environment. Both are vital and both are linked.[12]

> I have found a great amount of common ground but I've been very frustrated in the past .... [T]he need for me has been to try .... build bridges with socialists and the people in the Labour Party because I think there is .... more coming together in the red and green .... area .... I know the criticism is that green, oh middle class, they don't have any analysis of class and all that, well I think that again is some people who come into green politics,

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12 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.

> their background is such that they haven't taken that on board, they've perhaps been motivated by other things.[13]

As well as being sensitive to likely criticism from fellow Green Party members if they adopted too overt a leftist stance, several of those involved in such activities also found themselves having to defend positions associated with green politics from a comparable level of criticism from those groups on the left they were reaching out towards. Thus though they saw the importance of building such alliances these activists often felt caught in the middle between two opposing ways of seeing the world.

However, when it came to considering their relationship with the Labour Party, most activists remained highly critical of its current stance. It was recognised that some individuals within it, including prominent members had shown understanding of aspects of the green agenda. Amongst those identified as having made some efforts to come to terms with these issues were Chris Smith (then shadow spokesperson on the environment) and John Prescott, with the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) also coming in for praise. Despite this, it was generally felt that the Labour Party as a whole, in putting a priority on economic growth showed that it did not really understand green issues, which remained low down on its agenda, in effect amounting to little more than a veneer of narrow environmentalism added onto existing concerns. Labour's abandonment of any commitment to get rid of Britain's nuclear weapons and its failure to seriously address electoral reform were further reasons to regard it with suspicion. Considerable scepticism was also expressed concerning the direction in which Labour was heading, as in the following observation:

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13 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

> The Labour Party .... essentially the problem that they have got [with green politics] is that it doesn't fit with their basic growth, full employment ethos .... and their increasing support for capitalism also causes them problems in that respect. Put bluntly what will happen with the Labour Party is that they are going to be determined to be as responsible about spending money and promoting economic growth to generate revenue without raising taxes, and by the time they have done that there will be nothing left for the environment.[14]

Thus under Tony Blair's leadership, the Labour Party was seen to have taken a considerable shift to the right involving a complete acceptance of the capitalist market economy.

Given the large proportion of the Green Party activists who recognised the contribution socialist thought had made to green politics, it was a surprise that so few of the theoretical perspectives addressed parallels between the two outlooks. The most substantial discussions of socialism in relation to green politics were provided by Dobson and Hayward, with the Red-Green Study Group also providing a useful summary of debates between the two positions.[15] All of them identified areas of shared concern, including common commitments regarding equity, social justice, democratic participation, and the need to adopt international as well as local perspectives. They also noted a number of common criticisms made of green politics by those on the left in that it is perceived as representing predominantly middle class concerns and failing to adopt a class analysis, as well as being unable to identify a means to tackle dominant economic and political interests. In addition its critique of growth is seen as ignoring the priority of alleviating poverty, whilst

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14 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
15 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought (second edition), 1995, op. cit., especially pp. 170-186; T. Hayward, Ecological Thought, op. cit., especially pp. 176-180; and the Red-Green Study Group, What on Earth is to be Done?, op. cit., especially pp. 7-10.

its acceptance of natural limits is regarded as backward looking, as well as ignoring the potential for transforming social relations and the technological bases of production to meet human needs without destroying the environment.

As the discussions in Chapter 5 showed, whilst there is some basis for these kind of criticisms, they were all issues of which the activists were aware and seeking to address. One common critique which cannot be substantiated in regard to the Green Party is that in opposing industrialism green politics fails to address the problems created by capitalism. As will be seen below, the activists identified capitalism as the principal factor responsible for the destruction of communities and the environment. Some socialist perspectives did recognise this as an area of shared concern, as in the Red-Green Study Group's acknowledgement that greens were opposed to the dominance of money, the profit motive, greed and exploitation. For the activists the issue of industrialism versus capitalism only tended to arise in the context of green critiques of Soviet style systems or those forms of Labourism which, whilst portraying themselves as anti-capitalist, were seen as nevertheless committed to economic growth and productivism, as well as being centralist and non-participatory.

Other commonly criticised aspects of the green agenda were not necessarily incompatible with socialist approaches. For example the issues of decentralisation and the state have often been cited as areas of potential disagreement between the two outlooks, but as was seen in Chapter 5, the activists did not want to get rid of the state even though there was some confusion over which of its functions should be retained. Of greater possible concern was the level of self-reliance envisaged by some greens who expected that increases in local production would lead to a reduction in the need for

significant amounts of trade. Many socialists, including the Red-Green Study Group, viewed the notion of autarky with some unease since it could easily foster local or national insularity, as well as possibly taking undemocratic forms, whereas they saw a commitment to international interdependence as a counter to such tendencies. The difference between the two positions depends what form self-reliance takes. The activists believed that decentralisation would increase democratic participation, and whilst it was accepted that local communities would not necessarily be able to produce everything required, they felt that things should be produced locally wherever this was feasible. This was seen as not only leading to reductions in environmental impacts, but also as providing a means to undermine the global free market which works to the disadvantage of developing countries in the South, whose economies are currently structured towards export rather than towards meeting the needs of their own populations. Whereas the activists saw that reductions in commodity flows could have beneficial results, they favoured freedom of movement for people who wanted to travel, whilst improved communication between communities was seen as the best way to retain international awareness and counter local insularities.

A number of commentators including Dobson and Hayward observed that continuities existed between green politics and some subordinate strands within socialist tradition, most notably with the current represented by William Morris, which would seem to be confirmed by the acknowledgement of his importance by some of the activists.[16] In this sense green politics was regarded as offering a

16 For further evaluations of Morris's work in relation to green politics see: P. Thompson, Why William Morris Matters Today: Human Creativity and the Future World Environment, London, William Morris Society, 1991; and P. O'Sullivan, 'The Ending of the Journey: William Morris, *News From Nowhere* and Ecology', in S. Coleman and P.

means to re-evaluate the whole direction socialist practice has taken in the light of its own past and its ability to respond to contemporary issues. This has been recognised by Benton who accepts that the goal of an egalitarian, decentralised communal existence in which satisfaction by means of the acquisition of commodities is replaced by a society based on communication and participation, is not incompatible with a socialist agenda. He also acknowledges that green politics presents a challenge which requires a re-assessment of some of the assumptions underlying Marxist thought, particularly as regards trends towards productivism which do not consider wider consequences.

Others on the left, such as Harvey, whilst identifying the importance of some of the issues raised by green politics, seem more concerned with appropriating aspects of green agenda without significantly altering their existing stance. As will be seen in section II, such attitudes tended to be combined with attempts to portray green politics as implicitly reactionary and authoritarian, invariably drawing on arguments partly supplied by conservative critics of the greens. Yet this ignores the very reason why such conservative accounts have been so critical, which is because green politics is regarded as having been appropriated by the left in that it opposes capitalism, the free market, economic growth, and the authority of the state. Another twist to the argument provided by Bramwell and McHallam is that whilst green politics is outwardly anti-authoritarian, it actually represents a form of moral authoritarianism which seeks to impose its views on the rest of society in ways which would seriously restrict personal freedom and choice. It is a further irony that

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O'Sullivan (eds.), William Morris and News From Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time, Hartland, Green Books, 1990, pp. 169-181.

whilst Bramwell implies that green politics constitutes a fascism of the left, much of her own work has involved an attempt to 'rehabilitate' supposed green currents associated with National Socialism as the authentic source of political ecology.

Anarchism and Libertarianism

After socialism, anarchism was the second most cited ideology credited with influencing green politics with about two thirds of the activists recognising the importance of its contribution. The only named representatives of this tradition to emerge in the interviews were Peter Kropotkin and Murray Bookchin, but there was little evidence of a critical engagement with anarchist thought. Rather anarchism tended to be interpreted in popular terms as a metaphor for autonomy and resistance to authority as represented by the activists' opposition to leaders or hierarchical structures, and through support for non-violent direct action as a strategy, as illustrated by statements such as:

> [T]here is a strong anarchist tradition within green thinking .... It fits in with why greens don't want to have a leader, because they believe as far as possible people should be able to discuss their problems together and decide what they want between them as equals.[17]

> I think there are a few anarchist tendencies, not just the no leader, but the way we encourage people to be their own person .... the other parties, at whatever level, they'll always have hierarchies, but the Green Party tries to do away with that as much as possible.[18]

Support for this kind of popular anarchist sentiment tended to come from those activists with obvious links or past involvement with counter-cultural groups.

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17 Interview with male local activist, 2.9.94.
18 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.

Anarchism was generally regarded as having an affinity with many aspects of Green Party policy to the extent that it envisaged a society that was decentralised, locally self-reliant, co-operative, and based on direct democracy. There were ways in which the idea of anarchism seemed to serve a rhetorical function in that it provided a critique of socialism and other forms of government which were perceived as reliant on a large centralised state, but at the same time anarchism was criticised on the grounds that in a number of areas, such as environmental protection, some state regulation was essential. It was also insisted upon that as a political party involved in electoral politics it was necessary for the Green Party to engage with existing structures in order to effect change:

> [O]ut of all the different traditions we have most in common with anarchism, but we are not pure-blooded anarchists because we do believe in the need to engage the system as it is.[19]

Thus the views of the Green Party activists on these issues might be better described as libertarian rather than anarchist, though as will be argued in section III below, this is very much a libertarianism of the left which emphasises autonomy and participation, rather than a libertarianism of the right which would be defined in terms of preserving property rights. Indeed many of the activists describe the Green Party as a predominantly libertarian party in that it encourages self-expression and personal freedom whilst resisting authoritarian forms of control.

Many theoretical perspectives specifically reject charges of authoritarianism which have been levelled against green politics, mostly in the context of references to the contribution anarchism has

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19 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

made towards shaping its outlook. Though a number of accounts refer to this in passing, few discuss connections between the two positions in depth. Dobson does so in the context of O'Riordan's typology of different forms of ecological politics, finding the option of a 'self reliant community modelled on anarchist lines .... the closest approximation .... to .... a green sustainable society'.[20] Dobson is not saying that green politics is a form of anarchism, but that it shares a number of characteristics in that both are egalitarian and participatory, favouring a decentralised non-authoritarian society.

Similarly Eckersley suggests 'not only that anarchism is the political philosophy that is most compatible with an ecological perspective but also that anarchism is grounded in, or otherwise draws its inspiration from, ecology'.[21] This is because she believes anarchism consistently relates ends to means and is able to transcend approaches based on resource conservation, human welfare, and preservationism which in her understanding limits ecosocialist or eco-Marxist approaches. Eckersley partly bases her case on a reading of Bookchin, but comes to the conclusion that though social ecology and other forms of ecocommunalism come closer to her ideal type of ecocentrism than other comparable perspectives, they are unable to realise ecocentric objectives because they seek to by-pass the nation state, which she regards as essential to the practical implementation of reforms and international agreements.

It is this issue which is the sticking point in all discussions of the relationship between anarchism and green politics. Thus Bookchin, after initial statements of support for green parties comes to reject their commitment to an electoral approach because it

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20 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought, op. cit., p. 83.
21 R. Eckersley, Environmentalism and Political Theory, op. cit., p. 145.

involves working through the state. From the other side of the argument the Green Party activists themselves, though favouring greater decentralisation, accept that some policies must be co-ordinated at a national and international level. So though anarchism undoubtedly informs visions of a green society, it does not fully accord with the strategies considered necessary to bring it into being, or how it would operate beyond the local level.

Liberalism

After anarchism, the third most cited political influence was that of liberalism, with about half of the activists acknowledging it as having made some contribution to green politics, as in the statement:

> [T]he liberals essentially have a tolerant view of the world .... they talk a lot about the individual and personal freedom, and in so far as personal freedom means the right to free expression, rather than individualism in the Thatcherite sense, then I think there is something that the greens have in common with liberals .... a generally tolerant view of society is something that we share.[22]

> I think in many respects it tends to be coming from a rather liberal, with a small 'l' philosophy, particularly in the way we have decided the way a sustainable society would be run, would be essentially democratic.[23]

This was a common interpretation in which liberalism was regarded as representing notions of personal freedom and tolerance, as well as standing for human rights and democracy. Few of the activists mentioned particular liberal thinkers, though two did refer to John Stuart Mill, whose early advocacy of the concept of a steady state economy was seen as a predecessor of green critiques of economic growth. However, since liberalism in an economic sense was generally

22 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.
23 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.

associated with an advocacy of free markets and free trade, this was seen as incongruous with green politics, leading some activists to reject liberalism as a possible influence altogether.

Such attitudes extended to contemporary forms of liberal politics. Whilst the activists accorded the Liberal Party of the 1970s some respect for its attempts to come to terms with many green issues through an involvement in community politics and the adoption of a stance opposed to nuclear power, this current was submerged during their alliance with the Social Democrat Party and subsequent merger into the Liberal Democrats. Whilst the Liberal Democrats were credited with having developed some good environmental policies, which, on paper, made them more green than the other two main parties, in practice they were regarded as less than reliable due to continuing commitments to individualism and free trade which created conflicts of interest, as the following extracts reveal:

> [T]he Liberal Democrats [are] traditionally the most green of the three major parties .... Many of their policies on the environment are very good, just as some of the Labour ones are .... The problem again though is that .... under Ashdown, the Liberals have moved towards a really liberal view of economics. They are to the right of the Tories .... in philosophical terms, on a number of economic issues, and how you square that with .... a priority for ecology .... is beyond me.[24]

> [T]here are people in the Liberal Democrats who are very open to green thinking and I think Paddy Ashdown is very torn on that, and would like to be a lot greener, but can't quite bring himself to do it, because if you are in a party which has a long history of free trade, its a little bit difficult .... I mean a lot of it of course is that they are also trapped with the whole thing of, that so much of it is about individual freedom too as a philosophy, that it then becomes very difficult when your party is built on a very strong strand of individual freedom, that sort of libertarian tradition. You know ....

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24 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.

> regulate is not a word that comes easy to the Lib. Dems.[25]

Thus the underlying philosophy of the Liberal Democrats was regarded as incompatible with their attempts to adopt green policies. As a number of the activists remarked this was particularly apparent in the Liberal Democrat's high profile support for controversial road building schemes, which led to the Liberal Democrats being perceived as not credible or trustworthy when it came to confronting green issues in practice.

Few of the theoretical perspectives provided much discussion concerning the relationship between liberalism and green politics. Most of those which did refer to such a connection confined themselves to general remarks similar to those made by the activists, as with Dobson's passing references to liberal notions of tolerance and respect for diverse viewpoints as having been integrated within green thought, which also seeks to extend the idea of human rights by ensuring that these are linked to moral obligations towards the environment and future generations. Two contributions did provide insights into problems underlying the association of these two outlooks. One was Mellor's observation that conflicts exist between green conceptions of rights derived from liberal sources and the requirement for social justice on a collective level more usually associated with a socialist perspective. Hayward considered the similar problem of the commitment to individual autonomy within the liberal discourse of rights undermining green requirements to attribute wider social and environmental responsibilities. His argument that rights must be conditional on responsibilities, which in turn should be attributed on the basis of the power, levels of

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25 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

participation, and alternative options available to those involved, goes some way towards a possible resolution of tensions between liberalism and green politics. However, it was interesting that none of the theoretical perspectives directly addressed difficulties with incorporating the two outlooks in terms of the activists' major objection which focused on liberalism's support for economic individualism and free trade, rather than on the conception of property rights that provides the framework for the operation of market behaviour.

Conservatism

Perhaps the biggest surprise in discussing the area of possible influences was that more than a third of the activists, including many associated with the left of the Green Party, saw that there were possible continuities between aspects of conservatism and green politics. There was only one reference to specific conservative thinkers:

> [Y]ou've .... got [green] strands within critical conservatism, people like Carlyle and Ruskin. You know in some ways green politics stands in the same relation to them as Marxism stands in relation to them, in that they had a Romantic critique that was very influential. I mean Ruskin was very influential on British socialism, so was Carlyle, even though they were conservative thinkers.[26]

This highlighted that current within conservative thought which criticised the consequences of industrial capitalism, and implied that the greens were in part the heirs of this Romantic critique.

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26 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

The element of conservatism that was identified as most congruent with green politics concerned the notion of responsibility as the next two extracts reveal:

> [D]o we have anything in common with conservatism? Yes we do oddly enough, because conservatism has its own form of ideas of stewardship .... It is all very well saying that all species are equal, which some of the more extreme deep greens would say, but frankly this is not so, you know we are by virtue of Darwinism if you like, the dominant species .... and frankly that confers responsibilities .... and to that extent stewardship is a relevant argument. The idea that I also like about .... traditional conservatism .... is the idea .... that there is a balance to be reached between the interests of the community and the individual. Now in green politics .... it is just that the balance that we would set .... is so very different from the one that most conservatives would use .... I think that the other thing that we draw on from conservatism .... is .... the idea of the precautionary principle, [which] is profoundly conservative when you think about it .... you know, that we should always look before we leap in environmental terms.[27]

> There are aspects of conservatism which fit very well into the green philosophy and that is obviously the literal meaning of conservatism; conserving things. Not the Thatcherite element, but the traditional patrician element of the Tory Party who see their role .... as guardians not only of the less well off people .... they didn't believe in egalitarianism but .... had a sense of responsibility toward the less well off in society, which is absent to my mind from Thatcherite neo-liberal philosophy. And also they believed, of course because they had an interest in it as landed gentry .... they wanted to conserve the countryside .... [T]hough their reasons may be different, the goal of wanting to preserve the environment is very much there in conservatism.[28]

Thus traditional conservatism was seen as involving responsibilities which required preserving relationships within the community and with the environment. Whilst the activists remained critical of the paternalism and inegalitarian self interest underlying this idea of

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27 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
28 Interview with male local activist, 2.9.94.

stewardship, at the same time they could see much of value in such an ethic.

However, when the discussion turned to the present day Conservative Party, the activists were highly dismissive, regarding them as the Party of big business, individualism, greed, and corruption, who had been responsible for the destruction of the fabric of communities and environment. Though some Conservatives such as the maverick Richard Body and even John Gummer were credited with some understanding of green issues, the Party's economic stance and its opposition to market regulation were seen as evidence that they lacked any real commitment to implementing substantial green policies.

There is another aspect to possible connections between conservatism and green politics as suggested by the following statements:

> I've stood in two elections, and in both elections I have taken many votes from Conservatives and I always find that quite shocking .... and this always brings me back .... it's not a socialist party, it's a green, it's an environmental party and people see it differently to the way I do .... I would like to say we don't have any leanings towards the Tory group, but perhaps we do.[29]

> I think it's important to present what the Green party stands for as an overall package. The fact is that we are seen by the general population as being very similar to Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace and that part of an environmental lobby which actually stands in elections; and so a vote for the Greens is a vote for the protection of rural England. And I think it's important not to dispel that image because .... we draw more votes from Conservatives than we do from the other two parties. Our best results in this area, as you probably know come from rural areas where there is a big Conservative majority, and it's those people who will dare to vote Green, perhaps members of the National Trust, Council for the Preservation of Rural England, all the rest of it, they see the Green Party as standing for keeping the

29 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.

> countryside as it has always been and not given over to agribusiness .... I suspect that if many of our voters, particularly in the rural areas actually read the manifesto, and learnt more about green politics, they'd go back to voting Conservative.[30]

Whilst it is difficult to establish whether the Green Party actually does gain a high share of it's votes from disgruntled Conservative voters, a number of the activists certainly believed that this was the case. Since the kind of media presentation given to the Green Party contributes to a public perception that it is an environmental party, predominantly concerned with protecting the British countryside, on the one hand the activists wish to dispel this as a narrow interpretation of their position, whilst on the other some of the more pragmatic amongst them see that presenting themselves in this way might increase their share of the vote.

As regards those theoretical perspectives which referred to possible links between conservatism and green politics, only Gray viewed these in a positive light. He cited several areas of shared concern including a scepticism about progress, a recognition of the importance of maintaining the common life of the community, and an awareness that this encompasses intergenerational continuity. Whilst Gray retained support for the role of market mechanisms and property rights, he accepted that these were unable to protect publicly held goods, which would require state intervention to defend communities and environments from global market forces. Hence in order for the two outlooks to move closer together he acknowledged that the neo-liberalism of contemporary conservatism must be rejected, though he was also critical of greens for their anti-capitalist bias and what he saw as their hostility to technology and urban life. Whereas other conservative accounts, such as those of

30 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.

Bramwell and McHallam, were equally scathing about apparent backward looking tendencies amongst the greens, it was these trends which other theoretical perspectives saw as confirmation that green politics was implicitly conservative.

An obvious example of this was the argument provided by Lowe and Worboys which suggested that ecology when interpreted as an ideology seeking harmony, balance, and interdependence, was used to advocate the creation of decentralised, self-regulating communities on the model of traditional organic societies. Certainly, as Lowe and Worboys note, this is a theme apparent in the writings of Edward Goldsmith which envisage a society which in some respects is profoundly conservative in that it could be regarded as patriarchal, authoritarian, and restrictive of personal freedom. The limitations of Goldsmith's position will receive more detailed attention in section II below, but whilst it could be said that he had some influence on the early outlook of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, it would be misleading to see his views as representative of those involved in the Green Party as any reading of policy documents or the activists' accounts would demonstrate.

Other accounts, such as that of Benton were also critical of attempts to use ecology to provide a source of values, noting parallels with conservative evocations of nature, and tendencies amongst some within the green movement to imagine a return to some Arcadian golden age. However, though noting that many on the left equated a green recognition of limits to growth as indicative of a neo-Malthusian outlook, Benton argues that a concern with limits is not necessarily conservative, as responses to environmental problems could result in a variety of different forms of social organisation.

What is striking when these theoretical perspectives on possible relationships between conservatism and green politics are set alongside the activists' accounts, is that such different factors are emphasised. Whereas most theorists who consider this area focus on evocations of nature as a source of values as implying a wish to return to some kind of traditional organic society, the activists see no such connection. Indeed as will be revealed as part of their responses to such charges, they reject that they are seeking any such thing. They do detect possible parallels with conservatism in terms of notions of stewardship, responsibility, and the desire to preserve communities and environments from external threats. Only Gray's account comes close to recognising this connection, yet at the same time, along with other conservative critics, perceives that in other areas green politics is profoundly anti-conservative due to its rejection of capitalism.

Feminism

The other main ideological influence on green politics identified by around a third of the activists (eight women and three men) was that of feminism. The comparatively low level of acknowledgment granted to the contribution of feminism to green politics was something of a surprise given that the Green Party in its policy and organisational practice has gone some way to addressing issues of gender equality. As Chapter 4 shows, several women commented on the relative lack of sexism in the Party, as in the statement:

> [T]he Green Party .... has never put the sort of barriers in the way that other parties have done. I mean the barriers may still be there in terms of time, in terms of childcare, etcetera, but .... the Green Party is not

> actively anti-women in its structures, in its organisation, [and] in the behaviour of a lot of people within it.[31]

Though recognising that factors disadvantaging women in society did place a restriction on their participation in politics, the Green Party was regarded as responding to these issues more effectively than other political parties. Even some of the men mentioned that an awareness of gender issues had been accentuated by their activism in the Green Party, encouraging them to re-evaluate their attitudes, language, and behaviour.

Some of the women went further to insist that feminism was integral to green politics. Two referred to their experiences at the Greenham Common peace camp as particularly powerful in this respect. As one of them put it:

> [A]nother area .... is about feminism and the women's movement .... I mean at Greenham .... that was green politics, women there creating their own space, women had really got together, caring for the common and doing all the things you know about living there and actually bringing, articulating politics which was great green politics - everything, everything - international, social, personal, sexual, everything, and economics. But there has always been a lot of .... oh theres nothing in the green movement for feminists .... some feminists were saying this, but thankfully I think feminists have realised again that it is not what its been made out to be and its quite integrated.[32]

From this perspective, feminism and green politics were seen as sharing a number of common concerns, though this individual felt there was insufficient acknowledgement of this by those involved in either movement.

The comparatively low level of acknowledgement of the importance of feminism within the activists' accounts would seem to confirm Mellor's assessment that green politics has not sufficiently

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31 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
32 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

incorporated the principle of gender equality within its philosophy or practice. On one level this could be because such issues are taken for granted. Certainly as regards public practice, overt sexist language or behaviour is not tolerated in the Green Party, and childcare facilities are provided at events above the level of local meetings. Also though its Constitution only requires that one Executive post be held by a woman, that of Principal Female Speaker, about a third of all elected posts within the Party are held by women, with a comparable proportion involved in committees or working groups. However, given that just under half of all members are women, the Party has still not yet achieved parity. As both Mellor and Seagar argue, this is undoubtedly due to wider societal pressures which still ensure that women have primary responsibility for childcare, and because of other factors likely to reduce women's participation in political activity such as overly rigid time schedules, the often confrontational or abstract style of political debate, and the tendency of a few male activists to dominate meetings. Many women, and some male activists, were aware of these issues and felt that the Green Party had gone some way to addressing them, but they did not wish to adopt quotas or regulations to ensure better female representation, preferring an approach based on encouraging further changes in the political culture of the Party.

Some theorists such as Benhabib have drawn attention to other parallels between feminism and green politics in that both movements not only provide a critique of the current situation, but also articulate new sets of needs, socialising members into new practices, and creating new democratic and institutional forms. She thus regards both movements as agents of emancipatory change which

share common agendas in a number of areas.[33] Though such congruences exist between feminism and green politics, apart from a few isolated initiatives there has been little in the way of attempts to forge stronger links between the two movements.

Attitudes Towards Capitalism

Another area that elucidates the way the activists relate green politics to other political philosophies concerns their attitudes towards capitalism. Whilst it is debatable whether capitalism can be defined as a political ideology, in terms of what the activists see themselves opposed to, practically all of them identified the phenomenon of large scale capitalism as the principal cause of social and environmental problems, with more than three quarters of them seeing it as irreconcilable with a green society. Only two of the activists, both former Conservative voters, believed that it was possible for green politics to be reconciled with capitalism, but even they had reservations as one of them revealed in the statement:

> Well it can be reconciled with capitalism because our basic philosophy is that wherever possible you produce local goods for local needs .... I have no objection to somebody working hard or making a bob or two, but I do object to some nameless board putting out of work hundreds of small shops .... that is transnational corporations, big companies what have you and the sense of capitalism as such. Much play is made by the Tory Party of the *Wealth of Nations*, talking about the human hand of the market, which is true, but Adam Smith never had any intention that the capital that was built up could then be taken away from an area and plonked down on the other side of the world .... He assumed and stated

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33 S. Benhabib, 'Modernity and the Aporias of Critical Theory', op. cit., especially pp. 55-59. It could also be said that green politics and feminism challenge the paradigm of production and the separation of the private and public spheres, though for different reasons. For an examination of these issues from a feminist perspective see, S. Benhabib and D. Cornell (eds.), Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late Capitalist Societies, Cambridge, Polity, 1987, especially the introduction on pp. 1-15.

> really that you should not make your money in your village and then go and spend it in London; you should improve things in your village. And that's precisely what we are saying, but in a modern way; that you re-invest in the local community.[34]

This indicates that the activists are not necessarily against small scale entrepreneurship. Indeed two of them run their own small businesses. On the whole they seem to favour a mixed economy in which private and public enterprise operates at a local level and are subject to community control. What they are overwhelmingly against is large scale corporate capitalism as represented by the transnational corporations, and the social and environmental consequences which follow from the expansion of the power of the global market.

Such attitudes are prevalent across the Party. Here is the viewpoint of an activist who wishes to present green politics as beyond the political divisions of left versus right:

> I don't think green politics is compatible with capitalism, but I am also wary of getting drawn into a capitalism versus socialism type debate, because I don't think that is the principal issue. The principal issue is that of sustainability. Capitalism in the sense of the way in which the world economy works at the moment is quite simply unsustainable from a basic ecological point of view .... The basic thing for us is that it is not a struggle between left and right. It is a struggle between community oriented decentralising forces and globally oriented, control-minded big business. The free market does not protect communities or the environment.[35]

Once again it is capitalism as a global system which is condemned because it is environmentally unsustainable. This results in a critique of the free market and the whole notion of free trade as represented by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). A high proportion of the

34 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.
35 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

activists thus argued for a need to intervene in the market, not only to control the activities of big business, but also to reduce the level of global trade as a strategy to minimise environmental impacts, encourage local production and consumption, and to address the economic imbalance between North and South.

As it might be expected those on the left of the Party also see the critique of capitalism as central to green politics, as in the following example:

> I actually think green capitalism is a contradiction in terms .... I mean that would to me, would be an eco-socialist point of view; .... what are we producing [the goods] for and who holds the means of production? .... I would say green politics by its very definition, it has to be anti-capitalist, and that's something I have been berated in the Party for saying openly .... [I]f you make them think about it, they agree, but they will not actually openly state that .... I don't think it can be reconciled with capitalism .... We actually place a moral value on the things we produce, on the goods you produce, and you place a moral value on the way they are marketed. And that puts you into a completely different ball game which to my mind has to be anti-capitalist, by its nature it doesn't sit comfortably with the free market.[36]

This speaker relates her critique of capitalism to the rationale underlying the production of commodities and the ownership of the means of production. However, she acknowledges that by expressing her views in an explicitly eco-socialist framework they would not be accepted by many in the Party, even though they would be likely to agree with the substance of what is being said. As regards the statement on the application of a moral dimension to production and distribution, this would be likely to receive universal endorsement amongst Green Party members.

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36 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

Yet another objection to large scale capitalism concerns its lack of accountability, as in the following statement by someone who might be described as representing the pragmatic wing of the Party:

> In terms of how it works with capitalism, if it's large scale capitalism, I think there are problems .... because a lot of our policies talk about the breaking down of industry into more manageable units that are more accountable to government and to people. So therefore that's already saying we feel that our philosophy is not compatible with large scale transnational capitalism .... [A] lot of the reasoning that will come from the greens will be [concerned with] the democratic side of it and it will be [in terms of] the scales .... I think it originated more with the scales and has now shifted more to the democratic perspective in terms of why we feel that.[37]

Here concern is expressed not only on the grounds that the scale of transnational capitalism is incompatible with the construction of a decentralised society, but also that it poses problems regarding the democratic control of business, whether at local community or national government level. Thus overall it can be seen that the activists perceived capitalism as a threat to environments, communities, the quality of life, and democracy.

Whilst a number of the theoretical perspectives, including those of Offe, Habermas, Enzensberger, the Red-Green Study Group, Bramwell, McHallam, and Gray, all acknowledged the anti-capitalist dimension of green politics, few gave this issue the centrality which it appears to have as far as the activists are concerned. Their critique of capitalism can be seen as bound up with their opposition to economic growth, and as can be seen in the following discussion, it is this which the activists see as distinguishing green politics from most other forms of contemporary political practice.

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37 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

Differences from Other Political Parties

Bringing these discussions together it can be seen that though the activists are aware of continuities between green politics and elements drawn from earlier political philosophies, they also define themselves in opposition to many of the basic assumptions accepted by the political parties who are the contemporary representatives of those outlooks. The principal area in which the activists regard green politics as different from the positions adopted by other political parties concerns their views on economics, as in the statement:

> Because we don't go for growth, I mean that is the single most important fundamental difference .... With any other political party, Labour, Lib. Dem., or Conservative, the whole thrust is that if we make the pie bigger, we'll have more wealth, we'll all be better off. They differ in the way they slice up the pie, but they are all exactly the same when it comes to increasing wealth purely in monetary terms. They are not wildly concerned about the quality of life. They would dispute that, but .... their whole argument is unsustainable, that's the difference.[38]

> The main thing that makes green politics different from the mainstream political parties is the economic and social side of it. Its our belief that things can't go on as they are .... From the economic point of view .... though they are arguing for a better environment, they are not prepared to really question things like free trade and they still think multinationals are a good thing.[39]

> Everything is interrelational. Just like environmentalism can mean pretty countryside without taking account of the people at all, so a lot of the other parties' politics are only thinking about money, or only thinking about economics, and they are not thinking about anything as a whole.[40]

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38 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.
39 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
40 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.

Thus the activists argue that all other political parties have committed themselves unquestioningly to economic growth, which requires an acceptance of global free trade and support for the unrestricted operations of big business as represented by the transnational corporations. Because the other parties assume that well-being can be measured in terms of conventional economic indicators, the activists believe that they are unable to address wider issues concerning the social and environmental impacts of current policies.

Though the activists accept that the other parties are becoming more aware of green issues, and are beginning to formulate some policy in this area, they do not see much sign that this is linked to a broad understanding of the underlying causes of the problems involved. This is seen as being compounded by a tendency towards short-term approaches and a failure to develop an integrated viewpoint which would enable them to recognise that most of their policies in other areas are actually working against the green agenda. The activists largely attribute this to the existing ideological commitments of the other parties which prevent them from coming to terms with green politics as a complete package. Thus in the evaluation of most of the activists, green issues were not a priority for the other political parties, whose attempts to portray themselves as green were variously described as partial, cosmetic, opportunist, hypocritical, or cynical. However, it was also recognised that as the other political parties increasingly had to confront these issues, partly in response to pressures from the green movement, that this could, as one activist put it, lead to a shift in the base line of politics:

> [B]ecause its a framework philosophy the way in which it works in different places will be different .... you [could] end up with a green Conservative Party and a green Labour Party and a green Liberal Democrat Party, because what you have done is change the base line, but there will still be policy differences about how you get there and what it is you want to achieve at the end of it.[41]

Hence there was some acceptance of the view that green politics could easily take different forms in response to different sets of strategies and goals, though others emphasised that since it was groups like the Green Party which set the agenda, attempts by other organisations to portray themselves as green would have to be evaluated against the outlook and practice of those representing the original formulation and continuing development of green politics.

Chapter 1 raised the question of whether green politics constitutes an ideology in its own right. Though accepting that it had drawn on past philosophies and adopted a position that was broadly left-liberal, Dobson believed that ecologism could be identified as constituting a distinct ideology which consisted of a recognisable package of ideas that provided an analysis of society, advocated a particular type of social transformation, and formulated a programme to achieve the desired changes. Martell disagreed with this position on the grounds that ecology alone is unable to determine a particular social or political stance, so any attempt to deal with environmental issues must draw on established political traditions to answer questions of justice, equality, and freedom. Hence he argued that whilst ecology can be part of politics, it cannot provide the basis of a new political theory, because it has to combine with existing perspectives to deal with wider social and political issues. In general terms Martell is quite correct in that ecology does not necessarily

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41 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

lead to any particular political position, and could adopt a variety of forms, but what his argument does not address is that a distinct green political theory and practice has evolved, such as that represented by the green parties.

The activists' accounts above reveal the extent to which their outlook can be seen to have incorporated elements from existing political philosophies, though this has also involved the rejection of other aspects with which they were previously articulated. As was seen in Chapter 4, these selected elements have been combined with other ideas, including a reading of ecology, to form a recognisable ideological package reflecting the worldview of an identifiable social constituency. In this green politics is no different from other political ideologies, all of which develop and change, often adopting elements of other ideologies whilst discarding others, even taking different forms to adapt to changing circumstances, yet still continuing to represent recognisable political positions. When viewed in these terms the Green Party can be seen as articulating a particular version of green politics, though one which shares many of the aspirations of a broader green movement, though differences may exist concerning strategy and precise content of beliefs. Though Dobson's account is rather overgeneralised, nevertheless it is difficult not to agree with his affirmation of the existence of a distinct green ideology, even though this has the potential to take numerous forms. Whether he is correct in identifying it as left-liberal in outlook will be considered in section III as part of an investigation of how green politics can be located in relation to the political spectrum. Before that it will be necessary to examine a number of common criticisms of green politics which suggest that it represents the politics of the past rather than that of the future.

II: Critiques and Responses

Whilst it can be seen from the activists' accounts that green politics has drawn in varying degrees from other political philosophies, at the same time it rejects certain key assumptions underlying them, and seeks to portray itself as a new and distinct political orientation. However in entering into competition with other outlooks it has attracted sustained criticism by opponents who have represented green politics as implicitly authoritarian, anti-science and technology, anti-urban, and as seeking a return to some kind of rural idyll or state of nature. Before examining these charges and the arguments made by the activists in response to such critiques, first it will be necessary to consider possible connections with one other political philosophy which decidedly did not feature as an influence in the activists' accounts; that of fascism. This is because many of the criticisms which have suggested that green politics is somehow authoritarian or backward looking have sought to justify these claims by alleging that supposed associations exist between political ecology and national socialism.

Green Fascism?

As was seen in Chapter 1, Bramwell has argued that ecological politics originated amongst individuals and groups who also demonstrated strong affinities with nationalist and racialist outlooks, even contending that certain initiatives undertaken in Nazi Germany indicate that it was the first state to adopt comprehensive ecological policies. Whilst her highly selective approach to source material and questionable interpretation of the evidence leave her conclusions open to considerable doubt, her work has been seized upon by some

commentators as proof that a historical association exists between fascism and green politics. Thus Harvey cites Bramwell's discussion of 'blood and soil' to demonstrate that green politics invariably has an authoritarian agenda, as well as to suggest that because green movements defend characteristic environments within their respective home countries, that this perpetuates national identities associated with particular landscapes. Even those such as Dobson, who reject charges that green politics is authoritarian or nationalistic, still feel obliged to rehearse Bramwell's arguments, as though to say that perhaps it does have dubious origins but now it is quite different.

Other approaches touching on similar themes have tended to arise in a specifically German context. The sudden emergence of *Die Grünen* as an alternative political force in the 1980s led a number of commentators to suggest that the reason why only Germany had produced a significant ecology party lay in its exceptional national past, with some even making comparisons with the rise of National Socialism.[42] Such accounts began to appear in the US media at a time when the Greens were mobilising opposition to the NATO decision to deploy Pershing and Cruise nuclear missiles on German territory.[43] Rather than acknowledging the legitimacy of such concerns over the threat of potential nuclear conflict, these articles interpreted the widespread anti-American sentiment in Germany at this time as a symptom of a new sense of nationalism, in which the German people

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42 See for example, J. Vinocur, 'Germany's Season of Discontent', The New York Times Magazine, 8 August 1982, pp. 23-54; F. Stern, 'For Bonn Instability', The New York Times, 13 October, 1982, p. A31; K. Holmes, 'The Origins, Development and Composition of the Green Movement', in R. Pfaltzgraff Jr. et al. (eds.), The Greens of West Germany, Cambridge Mass., Institute For Foreign Policy Analysis Inc., 1983, pp. 15-46; and M. Greve, 'Greens Against the West', National Review, 28 December 1984, pp. 22-27.

43 Indeed the NATO decision taken in December 1979 coincided with the formal agreement to constitute *Die Grünen* as a national Party in January 1980.

were seeking to portray themselves as the victims of US domination in order to avoid a sense of national guilt and to justify the re-unification of their divided nation. Following a similar logic the Greens were portrayed as the heirs of the dark side of the German romantic tradition, being irrational, anti-capitalist, anti-modernist, anti-technological, and deeply intolerant of those who disagreed with them, thus 'since the Greens have inherited virtually every unsavoury tradition of Germany's past, it comes as no surprise that their views bear some resemblance to the Nazis'.[44] Criticism in a similar vein suggested that the Greens had been insensitive towards the Jewish community through statements condemning Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, and by staging events such as their Nuremburg trial which accused the producers of nuclear weapons of preparing a 'Holocaust' for humanity.[45] However, it was also acknowledged that the Greens fully accept German responsibility for Nazi war crimes and have proposed legislation to provide reparations for the victims of Nazism.

Most accounts accept that the Greens strongly oppose all forms of racism, showing solidarity with Germany's immigrant population and with the peoples of the developing world. Yet even sympathetic commentators have acknowledged that in challenging the post-war order of the German state, arguing for withdrawal from NATO, and in favour of a demilitarised and neutral status for East and West Germany, that in some senses the Greens did represent a new nationalism. Though there were divisions within *Die Grünen* on the

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44 M. Greve, 'Greens Against the West', ibid., p. 26.
45 See, S. Meuschel, 'On the Eruption of the German Volcano', New German Critique, No. 37, Winter 1986, pp. 127-135; and M. Brumlik, 'Fear of the Father Figure: Judaeophobic Tendencies in the New Social Movements in West Germany', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1987, pp. 19-37.

national question over whether to accept the post-war borders or seek re-unification, some accounts saw potential dangers in that a neutral Germany might ensure continued Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Even those commentators welcoming opposition to US militarism were concerned that arguments against American domination were often phrased in cultural terms, blurring distinctions between left and right, for what was being proposed was similar in some respects to the stance adopted by National Revolutionary groups who called for a third way between capitalism and communism (albeit in conjunction with a nationalist and racist agenda).[46] With hindsight these fears proved groundless for the Greens did not move towards a nationalist position and following the events of 1989 were the only German political party to resist calls for rapid re-unification, which in the prevailing mood of national euphoria contributed to their failure to win any seats in the Bundestag in the 1990 elections.

Some individual greens have displayed tendencies towards nationalism and the politics of the far-right. Herbert Gruhl, a founder member of *Die Grünen*, and the originator of their famous slogan 'we are neither left nor right; we are in front' was a former Christian Democrat MP who in 1975 had published a book which called for a dictatorship to avoid ecological destruction and maintain the defence of a free West from potential domination by the Eastern bloc. After the socialist wing of the Party gained control of the Executive at *Die Grünen*'s 1980 conference Gruhl resigned to set up the Ecological Democratic Party (ODP). The ODP emphasised the connection between nationalism and ecology such as by portraying

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46 See, Y.M. Bodeman, 'The Green Party and the New Nationalism in the Federal Republic of Germany', Socialist Register, 1985/86, pp. 137-157; and H.G. Betz, 'On the German Question: Left, Right and the Politics of National Identity', Radical America, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1987, pp. 31-48.

immigration as a threat to a 'clean' Germany, and by maintaining links with groups on the far-right, but electorally the Party was a complete failure.[47]

Another founder member of *Die Grünen* responsible for some problematic statements was Rudolph Bahro, a former Marxist who has moved to a green fundamentalist position.[48] In a speech at the Party's 1984 national convention Bahro drew direct comparisons between the cultural revolution required by the green movement and that of the Nazis, causing considerable disquiet in the audience.[49] Since his resignation from the Party in 1985, Bahro has gone further, seeming to call for an 'awakening of the Volk', a search for 'positive' aspects buried in the Nazi movement, suggesting that the ecology movement must 'co-redeem' Hitler, and even going so far as to state that today 'there is a call in the depths of the Volk for a green Adolf'.[50] It may be that these remarks have been taken out of context given that Bahro's writings are convoluted and obscure, for elsewhere he has stated that he intended such statements as a warning of the need to consciously distinguish between left and right or green and brown, rather than be unconsciously taken over by powerful authoritarian currents, but if this was genuinely his intention perhaps he could have made his point in a clearer, less provocative, and more responsible way in order to avoid the

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47 See, W. Hülsberg, The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile, op. cit., pp. 86-87 and 96-98.
48 See R. Bahro: The Alternative in Eastern Europe, op. cit.; Socialism and Survival, op. cit.; From Red to Green: Interviews with New Left Review, op. cit.; and Building the Green Movement, op. cit.
49 See, S. Meuschel, 'On the Eruption of the German Volcano', op. cit., pp. 130-131.
50 Cited in, J. Biehl, '"Ecology" and the Modernization of Fascism in the German Ultra-Right', in J. Biehl and P. Staudenmaier, Ecofascism: Lessons From the German Experience, Edinburgh and San Francisco, AK Press, 1995, pp. 52-53.

inevitable interpretations which have resulted.[51] However, it must be emphasised that though they are both former Party members, neither Gruhl nor Bahro can be seen as at all representative of the views of *Die Grünen.*

Though the German situation is an exceptional one, comparable arguments have surfaced in a British context. As was seen in the discussion provided by Lowe and Worboys concerning possible conservative dimensions of green politics, citing the writings of Edward Goldsmith they argued that decentralised communities could take an authoritarian form. Sarah Benton and Rob Edwards have gone further for in examining the attempt during the 1980s by the National Front to portray themselves as green, they note distinct parallels between the kind of ruralist and ethnically homogeneous society they wished to bring about and the scenario pictured in *A Blueprint For Survival,* which Goldsmith co-authored.[52]

Similarities do exist between the NF's vision of the future and aspects of that projected in Goldsmith's early writings which argued for the need for strong government action to stabilise population levels and create conditions for a rural, decentralised, and self-sufficient society. He also advocated a strengthening of the family as the basic unit of society and the reinforcing of traditional gender roles on a number of grounds. Goldsmith contended that with people living in extended families there would be less need for new housing, for welfare provision, for childcare facilities and early education, for

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51 R. Bahro, Avoiding Social and Ecological Disaster: The Politics of World Transformation, Bath, Gateway Books, 1994, especially pp. 280-282.

52 S. Benton and R. Edwards, 'The "Greening" of the National Front', New Statesman, Vol. 108, No. 2797, 26 October 1984, pp. 16-17. For a more detailed account of the National Front's attempt to portray themselves as green see, I. Coates, 'A Cuckoo in the Nest: The National Front and Green Ideology', in J. Holder et al. (eds.), Perspectives on the Environment, Aldershot, Avebury, 1993, pp. 13-28.

homes for the elderly, for consumer goods, convenience foods, and domestic appliances. He related this to arguments that 'family deprivation' due to the absence of a strong paternal and maternal influence, was the root cause of maladjustment, leading to a lack of discipline, crime, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Goldsmith also believed that the strength of public opinion in small communities would reduce the need for strong government, which was one of the reasons why he was against large cities because he saw them as fostering an anonymity thus enabling individuals to avoid such social controls. He further called for reduced mobility, including an end to immigration, as this was seen as likely to lead to inter-ethnic tensions and the need to provide welfare to unintegrated groups.[53] Goldsmith partly derived his ideas from a reading of functionalist anthropology which assumed that traditional or tribal societies which possessed a unified culture and a high degree of social integration were more stable and likely to be in equilibrium with their environment. Other influences included ecology and systems theory, which he interpreted as implying basic principles of harmony and co-operation, but where he differed from most other greens was in emphasising the importance of hierarchy as an organising principle.

Goldsmith was a significant influence on the early green movement, particularly through his role as editor and publisher of *The Ecologist* which provided a forum for writers and groups seeking to question the relationship between modern society and the environment. This does not mean that most greens necessarily agreed with the kind of social solution that he prescribed. Even whilst he was still active in the Ecology Party many of Goldsmith's

53 E. Goldsmith et al., A Blueprint For Survival, op. cit. See also E. Goldsmith (ed.), Can Britain Survive, London, Tom Stacey, 1971; and E. Goldsmith, The Great U Turn, Hartland, Green Books, 1988.

more extreme views met considerable opposition. For example its newsletter carried highly critical reviews of his books on the grounds that they envisaged a society that was authoritarian, sexist, intolerant, inegalitarian, and joyless, being more concerned with mechanisms of social control than with inspiring people with an image of the future they would actually wish to create. The association of such a viewpoint with the Green Party was thus regarded as a considerable liability, in that it perpetuated all the negative stereotypes which opponents have expressed concerning the agenda of the green movement.[54]

More recently Goldsmith aroused renewed controversy with his decision to speak at conference of GRECE (Research and Study Group for a European Civilization), which has been associated with the propagation of racist ideas in a cultural form, and has had extensive links with far-right and neo-Nazi groups.[55] Goldsmith stated that though he speaks to all kinds of groups this does not imply agreement with them, claiming to have no prior knowledge of GRECE, accepting their declaration that they have no political affiliation. He also drew attention to other groups, including some on the left, who have been in dialogue with GRECE. Nevertheless Goldsmith's attendance at this event was publicly condemned by a member of the Green Party's Executive, whilst the editorial team of *The Ecologist* stated their abhorrence of the views attributed to GRECE, which

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54 See for example, R. Slaughter, 'The Politics of Domination', Ecology Party Newsletter, March/April, 1979, pp. 9-10.
55 On the cultural racism of GRECE and its association with the far-right see, G. Seidel, 'Culture, Nation and "Race" in the British and French New Right', in R. Levitas (ed.), The Ideology of the New Right, Cambridge, Polity, 1986, pp. 107-135.

reinforced their commitment to oppose racism, male domination, and other forms of oppression.[56]

Though there are similarities between those aspects of Goldsmith's views which are authoritarian, patriarchal, and racist, and those of the NF, in other areas they have quite different agendas, for his right wing opinions coincide with an international or global outlook which has a radical dimension. Since his early involvement with Survival International in the 1960s, Goldsmith has shown sympathy with the situation of indigenous peoples and peasant farmers. His later writings have concentrated on the effects of the global market on developing countries, involving a critique of US imperialism, the role of global financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation, and concerning the practices of transnational corporations. Goldsmith has also expressed support for popular resistance movements such as those campaigning against the operation of TNCs in India, and the Zapatistas in Mexico, whilst his social views have modified to the extent that he now emphasises the role of participatory democracy in local communities and the importance of welfare provision to those in need.[57]

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56 See: E. Pilkington and A. Gumbal, 'Leading Ecologist to Address the Far Right', The Guardian, 25 November 1994, p. 9; and the letters in response from Goldsmith and the editorial team of The Ecologist, The Guardian, 5 December 1994, p. 21. For an example of recent dialogue between GRECE and the left see the special double issue of Telos, Winter 1993-Fall 1994, entitled, 'The French New Right: New Right - New Left - New Paradigm', especially the introductory article by P. Piccone, 'Confronting the French New Right: Old Prejudices or a New Political Paradigm', pp. 3-32, in which he argues that claims by GRECE to have changed should be taken at face value, dismissing suggestions that they have hidden agendas.

57 E. Goldsmith, 'The Last Word: Family, Community, Democracy', in J. Mander and E. Goldsmith (eds.), The Case Against the Global Economy: And For a Turn Toward the Local, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1996, pp. 501-514.

Another prominent former Green Party member whose subsequent writings indicate an apparent affinity with agendas normally associated with the far-right is David Icke. Due to his media experience as a television sports presenter, after joining the Green Party in 1988, Icke soon became a Party Speaker, stating his total commitment to green politics. In early 1991 he resigned from his posts and soon afterwards left the Party altogether. His decision was prompted by the belief that he had been contacted by disincarnate intelligences through a spirit medium, leading to public announcements predicting a series of forthcoming catastrophic global events, none of which subsequently occurred.[58] Icke was ridiculed by the popular media, but he did retain a following and remained in contact with some Green Party members who were sympathetic to New Age ideas.

In 1994 Icke published a book alleging the existence of an organised global conspiracy to enslave humanity, which quoted extensively from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*[59] Given that this document, a proven forgery, has been used to perpetuate anti-semitism, most notably through Adolf Hitler's endorsement of its authenticity, it was not surprising that Icke's book met a hostile response. When confronted with evidence that *The Protocols* were known to be a forgery Icke refused to reconsider his position. Whilst denying that he was a racist, Icke continued to affirm his belief that *The Protocols* contained an accurate description of events,

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58 See: D. Icke, The Truth Vibrations, London, Aquarian, 1991; and D. Icke, In the Light of Experience: The Autobiography of David Icke, London, Warner Books, 1993.
59 D. Icke, The Robot's Rebellion, Bath, Gateway, 1994. See also, S.A. Nilus, The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion, translated by V. Marsden, Sudbury, Bloomfield Books, 1978. For an investigation of the history of The Protocols see, N. Cohn, Warrant For Genocide, op. cit.

though he qualified his position by arguing that the world conspiracy was not an exclusively Jewish plot, renaming the document the 'Illuminati Protocols'.[60] When supporters sought to arrange a talk by Icke at the Green Party's Autumn Conference in 1994, the Executive decided to ban him from attending.[61]

Though up until this point Icke had remained quite sympathetic to green issues, his next book contended that a global elite had deliberately engineered environmental damage, then drawn attention to the problem through agencies it controlled such as the Club of Rome, the World Wildlife Fund, the Worldwatch Institute, and the World Commission on Environment and Development, in order to create a state of public fear to assist the institution of a world totalitarian government.[62] He further suggested that this elite has sought to suppress nuclear power by providing funding to environmental groups like Friends of the Earth who have led opposition against it.[63] This connects to Icke's argument that the green movement (and the Green Party in particular) are unconsciously colluding in the conspiracy by diverting attention away from the real problems,

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60 See the letter from Icke in The Guardian, 14 September, 1994. However, most of the agents of the conspiracy named by Icke happen to be Jewish. Icke has also been said to have stated that, 'many historians' believed that The Protocols were bona fide source material, see S. Cusworth, 'Icke revives the "Protocols"', Jewish Chronicle, 12 May 1995, p. 60. It was also reported that the manuscript for Icke's then forthcoming book had been returned by his publishers because it contained material that questioned the Holocaust, and that his lecture tour had been recommended in the newsletter of the neo-Nazi group Combat 18, see S. Cusworth, 'Icke has to cut Holocaust revisionism from book', Jewish Chronicle, 19 May 1995, p. 8.

61 See: V. Chaudhary, 'Greens see red at "Son of God's anti-Semitism"', The Guardian, 12 September 1994, p. 22; and 'Green Party action over Icke use of Protocols' in Green Party Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Network Newsletter, No 8, October 1994, p. 1. See also the discussion of this event in Chapter 5, section II.

62 D. Icke, And the Truth Shall Set You Free, Ryde, Bridge of Love, 1995, pp. 167-182.

63 Ibid., pp. 251-255.

perpetuating dogma and hierarchically suppressing freedom of thought.[64]

This new found hostility towards green politics can be partly attributed to the involvement of a number of Green Party activists in campaigns to draw attention to the racist subtext of Icke's message.[65] These opponents argued that he was relying on a narrow range of sources whilst ignoring scholarship that might undermine his views. They also suggested that Icke seemed curiously blind concerning the political agenda of some of his sources, for as well as *The Protocols*, he was recommending material produced by far-right groups in Britain and the US. Their main concern was that in mixing these conspiracy theories with material likely to resonate with those sympathetic to green and New Age concerns, the effect was the propagation of racist ideas in a disguised form to an audience which otherwise would not be receptive to such a message. These activists also felt that because Icke's public profile partly rested on his past association with the Green Party, they had a responsibility to oppose him.

Thus in answer to charges that green politics has affinities with fascism, or national socialism, it can be said that even covert expression of fascist related ideas within the contemporary green movement is extremely rare. As regards the green parties of Britain and West Germany, the four individual cases discussed above

64 Ibid., pp. 412-419.

65 These campaigns were undertaken by a number of individuals and groups, often acting independently of each other, and involved handing out leaflets to those attending Icke's talks, approaching the managers of halls where such talks were to take place to express their concerns, and writing letters to green and New Age magazines. See for example: David Icke and "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", Isle of Avalon Foundation leaflet printed by the Green Party and distributed at Icke meetings in 1995; and David Icke: part of the problem, not the solution, Green Party Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism Network leaflet distributed at Icke meetings in 1995 and 1996.

constitute the only obvious examples which provide any evidence to support such a proposition. Given that three had already ceased their involvement with the party concerned, and that their views received considerable opposition from within the green parties, none of these figures can be considered at all representative of the outlook of green politics. Their views must be set against the vast majority of those involved in the green parties who adhere to stated policies which are consistently egalitarian, democratic, non-racist, and internationalist.

In relation to this issue there have also been rumours that far-right groups have sought to infiltrate green parties, but in the case of the British Green Party no evidence has emerged that this has ever taken place.[66] As far as the interviews with the Green Party activists were concerned, about a quarter of them were aware of the activities of fascist groups who have sought to portray themselves as green. A slightly larger proportion of the activists, about a third, emphasised the need for the Party to demonstrate a strong anti-racist commitment. As the following extract reveals this also can be related to concerns about authoritarianism and the likely consequences of apocalyptic scenarios:

> I hope it doesn't come about because things get so bad that there's an almighty upheaval. I don't think that would be very good for anyone including the environment, but I mean the worry is if things do get significantly worse people will turn to simplistic knee-jerk [reactions]. I mean this is where politically, apart from being morally right or politically correct, its important to oppose racism. Its important to oppose the whole thing of which racism is the most obvious manifestation, that its someone else's fault, that we don't have to do anything about it, that theres a simplistic

66 Allegations of attempts at far-Right infiltration of the Green Party have been made by the anti-fascist magazine Searchlight, but they have never substantiated such claims. See for example, 'Dangerous Liaisons', Searchlight, No. 241, July 1995, p. 14.

> answer, and that we've got to follow some dictator whoever it might be, who's a nut-case more likely. That's why its important to oppose it and I think that we should.[67]

Hence the activists tended to reject the idea that some kind of disaster would necessarily lead to the creation of a greener society, precisely because this could all too easily lead to authoritarianism and the scapegoating of minority groups. This can be related to their rejection of those critiques of green politics which suggest that it does seek authoritarian solutions and the complete destruction of modern urban and industrial society.

Authoritarianism

Several commentators referred to in Chapter 1, including Lowe and Worboys, Harvey, Bramwell, and McHallam, suggested that green politics was implicitly authoritarian. Such arguments, which have also frequently appeared in the popular media, imply that because green politics perceives a threat to survival posed by the environmental crisis, that this requires a complete social transformation involving considerable reductions in levels of consumption, which would ultimately have to be imposed on a reluctant population. These accounts also portray green politics as morally intolerant in that it recognises no room for compromise, since it is convinced that it knows what is best for the future of people and planet.[68] As was seen above, the writings of some individuals associated with the green movement, such as Goldsmith, have the effect of seeming to confirm such negative stereotypes. However, as far as the majority of activists were concerned, the Green Party should be seen as no

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67 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
68 See for example the editorial, 'The green path to dictatorship', The Independent, 19 September 1989, p. 18.

more authoritarian than any other political party, as indicated by the following responses:

> [M]aybe they think that the fact that we are saying we've got to make do with less means we are saying you must have less, and we are going to impose less on you. Obviously with the tools of government you could do that to an extent, but the other parties do it all the time. You will pay more taxes, you can pay less taxes, this is the price of petrol, this is the speed limit on the roads, Criminal Justice Bill, its now illegal to protest against roads .... and the same could be levelled at other parties. If we are authoritarian so are they. What we are trying to engineer is an increasing level of consensus or support for a society run on a rather different set of assumptions about what is possible and what is beneficial to people and the planet and so on, and we're asking people to vote for it, or as most of them do, don't vote for it. They are not voting for an authoritarian programme. We are not saying we are going to have a revolution whether you like it or not and we are going to run the government and we are not saying if you disagree with us you'll be banged up for ten years. And we're using all sorts of democratic opportunities to put that argument across, and we're trying to argue - you'll have more democratic control, you'll have more economic self-determination, which is why we're against things like GATT. The Liberals witter on about local democracy, but you have got no local economic self-determination if your job is being run from America or Japan or somewhere. So I mean its a very different and new thing and people see it as revolutionary and perhaps they therefore only think it can be imposed by authoritarian means, but we are presenting people with choices about how much tax they pay like any other party, but on a different set of assumptions.[69]

> Authoritarian we aren't. We are authoritarian only in the sense that everyone in politics is to that extent. Because anyone in politics assumes with the role a certain arrogance, the arrogance that they actually know what is best for people. And I wouldn't be in politics if we didn't think that we had the answers for things. No I don't think the Green Party is particularly authoritarian because frankly it believes in empowerment and in persuading people that those ideas are right. Its not about to impose them on people.[70]

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69 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
70 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.

As both accounts emphasise, like any party the Green Party is putting forward a programme with the intention that upon achieving government it will be in a position to implement it through legislation, but that this requires persuading people to vote for it. So though their programme would require fundamental change, they are committed to achieving this through the democratic process, which they wish to extend by encouraging further local participation, a fairer electoral system, and more accountability.

This is not to say that the activists did not recognise the possibility that green politics could take authoritarian forms, as revealed by the statement:

> Shall we start with the .... authoritarian one. That I think is probably the most worrying one because I think our manifesto sometimes is not developed enough, that it is quite easy to manipulate and present some of the writings in the manifesto as being authoritarian. I think when we look at things like the Population Working Group, they haven't been extremely helpful in some of their writings. I would also argue that we are a political party with a broad church; it is inevitable that you will have members whose views you don't share. But what is important is to make sure that those extreme views that are very authoritarian don't have too much influence on the process ..... [O]ne can have an authoritarian green politics .... and I think its our job to fight that sort of thing. And I think there have been people in the Green Party that actually have seen that as the aim of green politics, which I find extremely disturbing .... I don't think you should ever dismiss the kind of scenario that say Sandy Irvine puts forward. I don't see that its not logical and I don't see that its not a political position that can be put forward. I think he actually puts it forward very, very well at times. I think its dangerous ..... and I sometimes think in the Green Party we don't look at that strongly enough.[71]

Here some groups connected with Green Party are identified as potentially authoritarian. The Population Working Group, which is regarded by many activists with a mixture of irritation,

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71 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94.

embarrassment, and disquiet, has tended to become a forum for those on the right of the Party. This involves comparatively few members, some of whom retain links with ECO: The Campaign for Political Ecology, a group which broke away from the Green Party after the failure of the Green 2000 initiative, of whom Sandy Irvine is the most prominent spokesperson. Like the Population Working Group, ECO represent a continuation of survivalist and neo-Malthusian trends carried over from the early green movement, though as well as focusing on population control as the key environmental issue, also emphasise the need for a conventional ecological political party with a single leader, which does not concern itself with social issues or get involved in extra-parliamentary activities such as NVDA. This follows from their belief that the only way to bring about change is to seek to be elected to government on a purely environmental platform, then to implement strong laws to enforce their policies, since they do not expect that the general public will co-operate with the need to reduce levels of consumption without some degree of compulsion.

Whilst few in the Green Party have much sympathy with such an approach, one of the interviewees, though not a supporter of the Population Working Group or ECO, did seem to agree with one element of this package, stating that:

> [P]eople are not going to choose an environmentally benign lifestyle without coercion, without intervention by the local or national government .... I would still want a strong, almost totalitarian regime in London .... which would introduce a carbon tax which really penalises the wastage of fossil fuels, and draconian measures to cut, not only private transport, but transport generally, but especially private transport obviously, and make our cities places worth living in. But at the same time I don't want the national government to pass any legislation which really ought to be the responsibility of regional or local government.[72]

72 Interview with male local activist, 2.8.94.

This kind of language, calling for coercion to ensure people lived an environmentally benign lifestyle, requiring draconian measures from a strong 'almost totalitarian' government, was not at all characteristic of most activists' responses on such issues, but does suggest that perhaps a minority within the Party does think in these terms.

Several activists acknowledged the existence of a tendency towards moral authoritarianism amongst some Green Party members. As one informant put it:

> I do think theres quite a strong strand within the greens which is certainly authoritarian in terms of personal behaviour .... One of the biggest insults in the Green Party is, 'that is un-green'. And it doesn't exist that I've come across in other European parties as an insult. And it can be about your eating habits that are 'un-green', it can be about if you are actually willing to enter into an argument with somebody it is 'un-green' .... [I]t usually means that I don't like what you are doing, but it is definitely a part of the Green Party, that you shouldn't do this because greens don't do things like that .... [W]hereas there is another part of the Green Party that says look, people have the information, they should make up their own minds.[73]

This can be linked to something which emerged during the consideration of lifestyle and green politics in Chapters 4 and 5, in that there were expectations on the part of some activists that Green Party members should conform to certain moral codes of behaviour seen as consistent with being green. Yet, as this speaker notes, it is a paradox that at the same time the Party regards itself as having a high degree of tolerance of difference, and insists that it wishes to allow people to make their own choices on the basis of the information available.

As was also indicated in the activists' accounts of lifestyle, there was an awareness of the contradictions and difficulties involved

73 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

in their own attempts to put their beliefs into practice, as revealed in the following remark:

> In a sense greens do want people to give things up I suppose, But they want them to give them up because they realise they are not getting anything out of them and because other things are more rewarding. I mean greens have trouble with this at a personal level. I mean an awful lot of people are addicted to certain things, consumer things or whatever it might be. And I don't think greens are walking around with this air of superiority all the time. I'm certainly not. Its more a sense that there is a better way that we could all live and you've just got to keep on trying.[74]

So though it was envisaged that levels of consumption would have to be reduced, it was hoped that this could be achieved by convincing people that alternative activities were more satisfying, and that everyone, including the activists themselves, should take what steps they could as a means of making a different kind of society possible.

Others sought to emphasise that green politics was strongly anti-authoritarian which meant that a truly green society could only come about through democratic means, as in the statement:

> For me green politics is fundamentally libertarian, always has been. It was born out of the movement of the sixties which was a revolt against authority .... If you look at the sociological make-up of Green Party members they are very often people who are anti-establishment and anti-authoritarian. If green politics is not introduced democratically through persuasion, which is the Green Party's goal, then in the future there is a real danger of authoritarian forces arising and trying to enforce ecological policies out of necessity, but that won't be the Green Party.[75]

Thus it was argued that because the Green Party consisted of members who were opposed to all forms of authoritarianism, it was unlikely that they would seek to impose their views on others.

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74 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
75 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

However, it was also suggested that in the absence of a democratic response to the green agenda, it was possible that a significant worsening of environmental conditions could provide an opportunity for authoritarian forces wishing to take advantage of a crisis situation. But though it was accepted that responses to ecological problems could take authoritarian forms, this was seen as neither desirable or sustainable from a Green Party perspective. Hence in answer to charges that green politics is latently authoritarian it can be seen that in the case of the Green Party, whilst there are minor indications of such tendencies amongst a small number of individuals associated with the Party, this must be set against its anti-authoritarian stance, its commitment to democracy, and its stated policy, all of which suggest that such charges have little justification.

Attitudes to Science and Technology

Another common critique of green politics is that it is characterised by an ambivalence towards science and technology. This trend was highlighted in a number of theoretical perspectives, including those of Cotgrove and Duff, Gouldner, Beck, and Lowe and Worboys, who all noted that though scientific research provided knowledge concerning environmental problems, thus influencing the emergence and outlook of the green movement, at the same time science and technology were regarded as a major contributor to the creation of environmental problems in the first place. Some popular accounts suggest that the green movement can be characterised by a hostility to science and technology and even represents an anti-rational worldview.[76]

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76 See for example, J. Horsfall, 'The hijack of reason', The Guardian, 20 April 1990, p. 25. This contrasts with arguments such as those made by Lowe and Worboys that the ecology movement is credulous of

Certainly the green movement has voiced a profound questioning of certain technologies, with some sections of it going further to reject much of modern science and technology altogether, along with those forms of rational, objective, and instrumental knowledge seen as underlying it.[77]

In relation to the extent to which the Green Party activists reflect such attitudes, for the most part they revealed a positive evaluation of the role of science and technology, as the following extracts demonstrate:

> Almost since its inception the Ecology Party placed great faith and belief in new technology for the simple reason that it saw new technology as a great way of freeing people from doing a lot of drudgery, boring work, mindless work, which could be done by machines. And therefore it was good it could be done by machines when computers came along thus freeing people to do more creative, socially useful work.[78]

> Where science and technology is concerned, science is probably one of the most important things to the environmental and the green movement to provide a pollution free, happy society as it were. I often think if you do stereotype people, individuals in the Green Party, you could say that they are computer boffins .... So I'd say we're very science and technology based, probably more than any other party.[79]

> The problems with science and technology are not the science and technology themselves, but the applications to which they are put. I did tell you I thought that the greatest achievement in my lifetime was that we put somebody on the moon. I'm actually pro-science I

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science and seeks technological solutions to environmental problems. Some commentators such as Beck argue that greens are both in favour of technological solutions and anti-rational.

77 See for example: T. Roszak, Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society, op. cit.; and K. Sale, Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution: Lessons for the Computer Age, Reading Massachusetts, Addison Wesley, 1996. For a more extreme position see, Green Anarchist, No. 42, Summer 1996, 'Technocracy is Tyranny' section, pp. 8-16.

78 Interview with male local activist, 2.9.94.

79 Interview with female local activist, 16.9.94.

> don't argue for turning back the clock .... Certainly there are things that I am very worried about, which I am against, but it doesn't mean I'm against science and technology.[80]

What these accounts show is that science and technology are regarded as of great potential social and environmental benefit, whether for freeing people from unpleasant jobs, or to provide a means to tackle pollution. Computer technology was discussed more than any other in this context, perhaps reflecting the high degree of computer literacy in the Party, with about two thirds of the activists either owning their own computer or having regular access to one. Some activists also expressed admiration for scientific projects that had no obvious direct benefits, with several citing the space programme as a worthwhile achievement for its own sake. Thus the activists could hardly be described as anti-science, even though they often expressed reservations concerning certain technologies.

In this connection many of the activists made the point that science and technology were not neutral, but conditioned by social, economic, and political forces. This led to an insistence on the need for a moral evaluation of the uses to which science is put, and of the resulting social consequences, as in the statements:

> It keeps on coming back to this thing about morals, but there are times when you do have to consider the implications of actually going ahead with the technology that you've got, things like releasing genetically engineered matter into the environment. You just don't have the faintest idea of what the consequences are going to be .... I think greens are very happy with technology, but they are also interested in thinking about the motives and consequences of using technology.[81]

> There are some greens who are a bit Luddite. We certainly do not accept that science and technological

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80 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
81 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.

> innovation is necessarily a good thing .... [W]e believe .... in the precautionary principle when it comes to science and technology, you know we'd rather actually work out what the consequences are likely to be before we do it .... We are not necessarily persuaded that the most technological solution is the best one .... [W]e're not mindlessly anti-science and technology. We think that science and technology offers you a range of possible solutions. You don't just choose the one that is most high-tech, you choose the one that is most appropriate .... but we do see, or most of us at any rate, would see a future sustainable society as having a level of technology not dissimilar to the present one.[82]

> But the whole bit about going back to the Dark Ages say and removing technology and so on, you can answer very easily by pointing out those bits of technology which actually help the balance to be achieved, and rejecting those where, for instance like nuclear power, which are not necessary and which are going to give rise to a completely different kind of social state which nobody is going to want.[83]

What is emphasised here is the need for thorough examination of the consequences of different technologies, which leads to an invocation of the precautionary principle by which it is necessary to prove the safety of a process before it can be introduced. Whereas some technologies, such as genetic engineering and nuclear power are seen as potentially dangerous, unnecessary, and likely to have undesirable social consequences, it is appreciated that science offers a variety of options. This involves choices in order to decide which ones are most appropriate for the creation of a future sustainable society, which many envisaged as having a comparable level of technology to the present.

Not all the activists were in full agreement as to which technologies should be retained. As one of them argued:

> The technology that we are used to, things like computers and so on, I think will have to go .... there is no way of keeping even the good bits of most of it ....

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82 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
83 Interview with female local activist, 2.8.94.

> I'm a great fan of the Schumacher ideas of intermediate technology and technology that empowers individuals .... The thing about the computer industry for example is that you can only do it on a huge centralised scale .... and that to me is not sustainable, because we cannot .... support that kind of structure .... I think that the way ahead is small communities that are much more self-sufficient.[84]

From this perspective a society consisting of small self-sufficient communities could not be combined with centralised, large-scale production processes, such as those required by the computer industry. Instead he argued for a human-scaled technology subject to local control, even if this did suggest a future involving a much lower level of technology than the present. This viewpoint was something of an exception given the positive evaluation of computer technologies noted earlier, and perhaps all the more surprising since the individual in question earns his living in the computer industry.

Others, whilst advocating the need for alternative technologies appropriate to a decentralised society, denied that this could be interpreted as anti-science, as revealed in the statements:

> There is a back to nature. There is a sort of idyll aspect, but none of us believe we are going back to that, certainly not very quickly, and none of us believe that to do that you've got to junk all the positive things about current day society and technology. You know I'm all for silicon solar panel construction, it isn't some low-tech stone age technology, nor is vertical access windmills, or all sorts of materials now used for insulation, nor are running railways low-tech. I mean its nonsense. I mean a lot of people in the party use computers. One way you can actually cut down on energy consumption and commuting and so on is to use modems and computer technology. You know computers can be used to do accurate modelling of things so that you get it right before you make the thing .... We're not against technology, but as its been said many times before, its what its used for. We would feel that there's a danger in, if something's possible, then you do it. Its what are the ecological and social consequences - genetic engineering and human reproductive technologies are the sort of best current examples of the danger of, well if its

84 Interview with male local activist, 7.9.94.

there you're going to have to use it .... And that's probably where the anti-technology charges come from, because you're said to be trying to put a brake on scientific knowledge and advancement, but there are plenty of other avenues for scientific advancement that are not going to take us down so many morally worrying and disturbing routes. I mean the science of ecology, and chemistry, physics, material sciences, all those things necessary to actually reduce our impact on the environment, enable us to have as good a .... quality of life without destroying the environment in the process. So I totally reject charges that we are anti-technology, but .... old ways can be better, the traditional ways are often more appropriate, certainly in terms of retaining local control and involving local people in the developing world. And we want to look at things, have a proper cost benefit analysis of what's being done before you do it, rather than saying, here's the latest Western high-tech solution, that by definition is better. Its about asking the right questions and applying, its about appropriateness, not about whether its high-tech or low-tech.[85]

As for being Luddite and wanting to go back to the caves - patent nonsense .... There are very few people I know in the Green Party at any level who do not have a word processor, answer machine and at least one phone .... People are fascinated now by internet. At the Big Green Gathering we had internet on a vehicle. There was a bus there running off twelve volt batteries from wind generators and sun generators powering their internet satellite communication and it was just, it seemed to encapsulate in a sense the locality and the global-ness of the vision .... So I mean technology and especially alternative technology I think is absolutely part and parcel of the green movement.[86]

Whilst repeating a number of points already emphasised in other accounts, what these contributions add to the debate is that building a sustainable society will require incorporating the positive benefits of modern technologies, particularly by focusing on those relating to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, as well as elaborating on the benefits of computers as tools for modelling as well as for aiding communication, linking the local and the global. Thus science and technology are seen as providing a means to

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85 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
86 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

improve the environment and the quality of life, though with the proviso that the most technologically advanced solutions are not necessarily always the most appropriate in all situations. Whilst these two accounts seem to differ on whether green politics does seek to create a more simple rural society, the substance of their arguments on the role of technology are almost identical.

On the basis of the activists' contributions on this topic, they cannot be described as anti-science, since for the most part they are enthusiastic about the potential contribution it can make towards improving quality of life and the environment. Neither can their views be interpreted as technologically determinist, for they show an awareness that the direction taken by science and technology involves social, economic, and political choices. This leads them to emphasise the importance of introducing moral criteria, such as the precautionary principle, into the evaluation of the consequences of different technologies. Their arguments are also based on the need for democratic control of technology, which can be related to their advocacy of alternative technologies appropriate to the creation of a decentralised and sustainable society. Differences were expressed over whether this would place a limit on those technologies requiring production on a large scale, which can be related back to similar arguments which arose in relation to the role of the state in a decentralised society. Again most activists adopted a pragmatic position and accepted that some large scale production was inevitable, with few wishing to reject the benefits of modern technologies as long as they were compatible with the goal of sustainability.

Anti-urbanism, Back to Nature and the Search for a Rural Idyll

This leads to another common critique of green politics, particularly apparent in the accounts of Beck, Giddens, Lowe and Worboys, and Bramwell, in which it is portrayed as anti-urban, and as seeking a return to nature or to recreate some kind of rural idyll. Once again, when set against the activists' accounts, such charges have little justification. When asked whether they wanted to go back to nature or a more simple rural life, some activists did admit that their own ideal sustainable society was a predominantly rural one, though such views were likely to be subject to qualification, or change with time, as the following remarks show:

> Ideally, yeah, that's exactly what I want, but I'm not naive enough to think that is going to happen, or that it is what other people want, and I wouldn't want to impose my views on anyone else. I think it should be possible to do that, and I think I'm certainly very much in a minority.[87]

> [T]here are no doubt people in the Green Party who do somehow hanker after images like that. And to some extent .... many years ago .... I really thought cities were very unpleasant, inhumane places, and there had to be drastic changes, and there had to be much more people out in the country and all that sort of stuff.[88]

Though some activists did conceive of an ideal society in terms of small self-reliant communities in a rural context, it was accepted that this was not an immediate prospect, but that it should be an available option for those who wanted to live like that. Others acknowledged previously harbouring strong anti-urban sentiments, but that they had since modified their views, even to the extent of coming to positively enjoy city life.

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87 Interview with female local and national activist, 3.9.94.
88 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.

This can be connected to the feeling of many of the activists that cities could be not only highly pleasurable places to live, but also environmentally sustainable, as the following remarks suggest:

> I think it should be perfectly acceptable for people to want to escape and live in an isolated area .... but at the same time I think the most vibrant, exciting places are cities. I personally will always be dragged back into cities where everything is .... I wouldn't ever consider myself to be a regressing cave-dweller type.[89]

> The whole green project is a symbiosis of the two [urban and rural] so that you can have technology within a rural environment .... I mean this leads onto your next question about urban areas, I mean we have concepts of greening the cities .... there's no reason why you shouldn't have a high-tech liberated society living in an environmentally sound [urban] context.[90]

This positive evaluation of urban life and recognition that cities could easily become greener and pleasanter places to live, perhaps reflects the fact that about half of all Green Party members live in urban areas. Though many of the activists were critical of the current state of urban degradation, the level of social inequality, and the lack of environmental sustainability of urban life, they argued that green policies were designed to transform cities rather than abolish them.

When discussing the kind of future society they envisaged, what the activists emphasised was that it should be community based, with local production for need, and local democracy, but few specified that this would be confined to a rural context. Rather they seemed to expect a gradual process of change which, though aimed at altering current structures and redirecting social goals, could be applied to the circumstances in which people were already living,

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89 Interview with male local activist, 20.7.94.
90 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.

whether in a rural, suburban, or urban situation. Hence they overwhelmingly rejected the notion that green politics involved a return to some rural idyll or state of nature, as witnessed by statements such as, 'the whole thing of harking back to any Golden Age is a complete myth',[91] or as one urban dweller put it, 'I don't want to return to a state of nature .... I don't even like the countryside'.[92]

As regards the stereotyped portrayals of green politics there was some recognition of how these had come about, and that there were a small minority of Green Party members who might be seen as conforming to them in some ways, as the following comments reveal:

> Well I would say that there are certain people within the Green Party who are, who want to return to a rural idyll. I mean there's no doubt about it, there are people who fit all those equations, but they are a small percentage of the Party really. They may be our conscience if you like, but .... that is not what the Manifesto says.[93]

> [T]here is in the language, which I think a lot of greens use, a lot of it is we will go back to, we will give back .... Back is a word which is used a lot, rather than we will find a way to open up. A lot of the language is backward looking .... but I think most of us actually are far more about looking at what sort of future you can construct.[94]

But what these comments also make clear is that such backward looking views do not accurately represent either Green Party policy or the forward looking outlook of the majority of its members.

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91 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
92 Interview with male local activist, 1.9.94.
93 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.
94 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.

Romanticism, the Enlightenment, and Green Politics

All these themes can be related to another question which emerged in Chapter 1, regarding whether green politics can be classified as a contemporary form of Romanticism, or if it represents a continuation of the Enlightenment project. Since for Habermas green politics has been structurally generated by systemic processes impacting on the lifeworld, leading to resistance by sections of the New Middle Class and other groups furthest removed from the productivist ethos, this suggests that he views it as a consequence of modernity. Following from this, on the one hand he wants to say that this response is not simply reactive, because it incorporates universal values associated with the Enlightenment, such as those of equality, social justice, participation, human rights, and self-actualisation. On the other hand Habermas is concerned that the greens manifest anti-modernist and anti-rational trends, so he portrays them as defensive rather than emancipatory in character. This can be related to his insistence that humans can only have an instrumental relationship with nature, whereas the greens in criticising instrumental rationality wish to extend notions of value rationality to encompass the non-human world. Because in Habermas' terms this is impossible, he regards such intentions as indicating a mystical or Romantic worldview. Whilst by no means all greens interpret this issue in terms of seeking some kind of communion with nature, where there would be practically universal agreement on their part is in rejecting a purely instrumental approach to nature, which they would regard as having created the environmental crisis and other social problems in the first place. In portraying the greens as defensive and Romantic, Habermas also neglects the extent to which they are seeking to create

new lifestyles, structures, and relationships, which are based on an alternative rationality resulting from a reflexive critique of modernity.

Initially Beck's analysis would seem to provide a useful complement to that of Habermas by way of his recognition that the pervasiveness of global invisible risks has created a reflexive modernity, giving rise to new forms of politics based on competing rationality claims. Beck identifies these risks as having their source within instrumental forms of rationality, but after criticising arguments suggesting that those who dispute the rationality of science will unleash irrational forces, then goes on to uphold a similar position in his portrayal of green politics. At first Beck seemed to regard green politics as the precursor of a new reflexive modernity, but subsequently characterises it as seeking a return to nature, which in his view no longer existed, except as a metaphorical bolt-hole for anti-modernism. At the same time he suggests that the ecological movement is as much a response to a moral crisis in modern society for which the destruction of nature merely acts as a convenient focus. Beck further argues that whilst green politics is critical of science, it is also credulous of it, invoking technological solutions to problems, rather than addressing the social and moral issues underlying them. Thus by implication green politics is simultaneously anti-modernist and technocentric.

A similar level of contradiction can be found in Giddens' contribution to the debate. He too begins by regarding green politics as a product of reflexive modernity, even suggesting that in many respects it supports his notion of the emergence of life politics. Yet soon afterwards Giddens decides that green politics cannot offer a way forward because it seeks a return to nature, which, like tradition, no longer exists. What is common to all three accounts is

that they regard green politics as facing in two directions at once. Whilst they all initially recognise ways in which green politics corresponds to, and even confirms their respective analyses of trends within modernity, they also wish to characterise it as Romantic, backward looking, and anti-modernist.

Not all theoretical perspectives adopt such a stance on this issue. Offe denies that the greens are Luddites yearning for a simple communal life which aims to preserve a Romantic or traditional past. Though, like Beck, he argues that there are ways in which they are seeking to apply a brake to progress and create a utopia of avoidance, this can constitute a modern critique of modernisation. For Offe this is because it represents an opposition to the logic of capitalism and instrumental rationality on the grounds that the consequences arising from these processes are self-destructive. The greens do not reject the need for a planned approach, but propose an alternative rationality in which ethical criteria take priority over economic and technical requirements. Like Habermas, Offe notes the green movement's commitment to many core values of the Enlightenment, but at the same time observes that they perceive that some of these may be incompatible with each other and even conflict with human needs. As a consequence of their main class base, Offe describes the greens as universalist and internationalist in outlook, thus coming closest to the politics of the left, even though in other ways they transcend categories of left and right.

Hayward adopts a similar position, arguing that green politics, in challenging economic progress, instrumental rationality, and the domination of nature, is drawing attention to trends which are proving to be self-destructive. From this perspective modern society

is neither rational nor enlightened as currently constituted.[95] Hence he contends that the critique provided by green politics represents a renewal of the Enlightenment project, combining themes previously outlined by critical theory with a realist ecological analysis. Hayward goes further to argue that green politics has not only incorporated the emancipatory aims of the Enlightenment, but also seeks to extend them by creating new avenues of protest, new forms of practice, new public spaces, and a redefinition of the political.

In the light of the activists' responses to negative critiques of green politics, they cannot be described as representing a backward looking movement, or as anti-rationalist in outlook, in the way that Habermas, Beck, and Giddens imply. As was seen in Chapter 5, during the discussion of nature and values, whilst the activists were critical of an instrumental approach to the non-human world, few saw solutions in terms of possible *communion with nature. Rather they* wished to emphasise the moral responsibilities of humans towards nature as a step towards the creation of a sustainable society based on a value rational outlook in which means are not separated from ends. A similar stance can be detected in the activists' moral critique of the consequences of destructive technologies. Recognising that science is determined by social, economic, and political choices, they favour the development of alternative technologies subject to democratic control. As to the suggestion that they seek some kind of return to nature, the activists' accounts reveal that though they wish to create a sustainable relationship between society and the environment, most believed that this could be attained in urban as

95 This is one of the arguments used by Marcuse in his critique of Weber's concept of capitalism. See his essay, 'Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber', in H. Marcuse, Negations: Essays in Critical Theory, London, Free Association Books, 1988, pp. 201-226.

well as rural contexts. Neither did they envisage this as requiring a rejection of the benefits of modern life, though they did argue for a redirection of social and economic goals into less destructive and more satisfying practices.

When this is taken into account, the portrayal offered by Offe and Hayward of green politics as a modern critique of modernity, would appear to more closely represent the activists' concerns. The activists do seem to recognise capitalism and purely instrumental forms of rationality as principal contributors to contemporary social and environmental problems. Yet whilst noting that progress has proved incompatible with human needs, they retain a commitment to many core values of the Enlightenment. Thus as Hayward suggests, their critique could be regarded as a renewal or extension of the Enlightenment project, through their advocacy of practices which seek to open up democracy and participation in order to build a society that overcomes the unintended consequences of modernity.

However, it would not be entirely correct to describe green politics as an exclusively modernist movement. Certainly the activists could be seen to have incorporated elements of a Romantic critique of modernisation, industrialisation, and large scale capitalism. Yet because Romanticism can take a variety of forms this is not necessarily an indication of backward looking tendencies, since images of an idealised past can not only be used to provide a moral critique of the present, but also to serve as a focus for struggles to create a better future.[96] It might thus be more accurate to interpret green politics as involving a synthesis of Romantic and Enlightenment elements, which may go some way towards explaining the confusion of

96 For a typology of different forms of Romanticism see, R. Sayre and M. Löwy, 'Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism', New German Critique, No. 32, 1984, pp. 42-92.

some commentators in seeking to portray it as one or the other. The statements of at least some of the activists would seem to bear this out, as in the example:

> We're still in this reductive Western dichotomy of you either are or you aren't .... The whole green project is a symbiosis of the two .... It combines this rationalism which science is based on with the romanticism .... I mean its not incompatible, its just on the surface a paradox. So you've got both, you've got romantics and realists.[97]

From this perspective the critique of modernity and the vision that an alternative is possible has romantic connotations, but the whole project of constructing an organised political opposition, developing an analysis of the problems society is facing, and of planning a better future involving the creation of alternative social, economic, political, and technological structures, requires a more pragmatic, rational, and realist stance.

Thus however it is categorised, green politics must be seen as a forward looking movement. It may be that on a practical level the strategy for achieving its desired goals is underdeveloped, but the activists are motivated by a vision of building a better future, which might be seen as a green utopia. As one activist put it:

> We live in our parents' utopia really .... We live in a society that was a utopia for our ancestors. Having an idealised society makes it feel that it is beyond reach, but its not beyond reach because we live in a society that was someone else's ideal. Obviously when they had that ideal they did not see the faults in it, that would come with that ideal, so we live in a society that is full of faults, and that is intrinsically going to change, because dreams change.[98]

Though aware that it might appear unrealistic to some, the activists felt that they were contributing to a process of bringing about

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97 Interview with male national activist, 17.12.94.
98 Interview with female local activist, 31.7.94.

fundamental social transformation. Many expressed the view that this change would be unlikely to happen in their lifetime, but that it would come. Such a strong future orientation further confirms that it would be quite mistaken to portray green politics as backward looking.

III: Green Politics in Relation to the Left-Right Political Spectrum

Another line of approach to an exploration of the political location of green politics is offered by considering how it can be placed in relation to the left-right political spectrum. Questioning the activists on this issue elicited three main sets of responses. Just over a third of the activists maintained that green politics was neither left nor right, and thus could not be placed on the conventional political spectrum, as in the following statements:

> [T]he left-right wing axis .... I would say the overwhelming majority of people in the Green Party, in green politics in general reject as being anachronistic.[99]

> I certainly don't believe that it comes within the conventional political spectrum .... greens talk of a grey-green spectrum .... [C]onventional socialist economics and conventional capitalist economics are both equally unsustainable in terms of the finite limits of the planet.[100]

> It sounds very trite and its not a very original phrase, 'not left nor right but ahead' .... I mean others would argue that it is somewhere on the left. I think that its sufficiently distinct .... there are the grey parties and they are on a spectrum about how you organise society along a particular economic model .... then there is the green economic model and there would be positions along that. And the Green Party like any other party is a

99 Interview with male national and local activist, 15.11.94.
100 Interview with male national activist, 27.8.94.

> coalition and there are people who you could say, for comparative purposes, are more conservative or more socialist, or take a more liberal view or something. But the foundation of it is so much different to the other parties. I think it is tactically not helpful and philosophically not right from my personal point of view to try and put green politics on that spectrum.[101]

> I don't know if it is a good idea to locate yourself in relation to other parties because then you are immediately positioning yourself as an adjunct to the established political order, so I would always try to put over that we are a new way of thinking, because they are locked into a way of thinking that is leading to our destruction. We want to get out of that.[102]

Those articulating this position, who included most of the former conservative voters amongst the activists, tended to argue that green politics was something entirely new and different, proposing radical alternative solutions as opposed to the conventional economic agendas of the 'grey' parties. This led some of them to hypothesise the existence of a second spectrum, which they represented diagrammatically by drawing the left-right spectrum as a horizontal line, placing green politics somewhere above it, often at a right angle from the centre. It was also contended that on tactical grounds it made sense to differentiate the Green Party from what was seen as outmoded approaches.

A second group comprising of a quarter of the activists, whilst insisting that green politics was not on the political spectrum, when asked what position it occupied in relation to left and right, saw it as tending towards the left, as revealed in responses such as:

> I suppose you've got to say its definitely on the left, but I also feel its not really part of the spectrum, it is quite separate.[103]

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101 Interview with male national activist, 22.7.94.
102 Interview with female local and national activist, 17.12.94.
103 Interview with female local activist, 5.9.94.

> [T]his slogan was, 'neither to the left nor right, but in front', or something. In a way I would more identify with that because I don't like this sort of division, although I would say that probably I would go for seeing it sort of left I suppose, because of what the other things I identify with are.[104]

> I would place it completely outside [the spectrum] .... but .... if you are going to look at left and right, then obviously we are on the left.[105]

Hence this group were more equivocal in that they saw green politics as not on the left-right spectrum, but at the same time believed it inclined towards the left. Like some of the first group, some conceived of a second spectrum in which green politics was situated above a horizontal line representing the left-right spectrum, but in their case a second line drawn from its centre towards their preferred position was at a left-leaning angle.

The rest of the activists, again just over a third in number, for the most part had no problem in locating green politics on the political spectrum, and it doing so placed it unambiguously on the left, as the following examples demonstrate:

> I think if you are looking at it in the conventional left and right terms, it owes more to the left. It is never a way that I choose to describe it publicly, because I think that just carries with it so many preconceptions and so much baggage. And also in a sense anyway it extends the left because it is demanding that people actually take account of things which a lot of them, have never taken account of before.[106]

> I would say that because politics in this country has moved so very much to the right, we have ended up rather on the left wing of established politics.[107]

> The Green Party must be left of centre because I think the traditional capitalist viewpoints, you know economic

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104 Interview with female local and national activist, 14.12.94.
105 Interview with female local and national activist, 20.9.94.
106 Interview with female national activist, 15.9.94.
107 Interview with female local and national activist, 11.12.94.

liberalism, this kind of stuff doesn't work for it, its not compatible with it, therefore we are obliged theoretically to be clearly to the left of centre. I think that a practical consideration that pushes us to the left of centre in terms of political tactics is that that's where the space is. There is no room for any more .... in the centre.[108]

I mean there is a conventional Green Party wisdom that the Green Party is not right, left or centre, its none of those things. I think that is unrealistic to be quite honest. I do think if we are going to play politics, the Green Party does fit into the left-right divide of the spectrum and definitely falls on the left side.[109]

If one has to place it on the traditional political spectrum, and I think one has to, I think its naive not to, one has to place it in my opinion .... on the far left .... I think it was the '87 Manifesto that was actually written about in the *Daily Telegraph* wasn't it, 'it makes that little work by Marx and Engels pale into insignificance'.[110]

I would obviously place it on the far left because it has got a fundamental critique of the commodity, it believes in social equality, and really it talks about communalistic institutions. But I don't think the left-right spectrum .... is the only spectrum.[111]

Those who adopted this position provided a range of responses from the moderate to the far left. This included those who preferred not to publicly acknowledge that green politics is more to the left because this could be seen as encumbering the Party with too much ideological baggage. Some saw the Green Party as having become left by default due to the rightward shift of the main political parties, which others identified as providing a tactical opportunity to occupy

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108 Interview with male national activist, 21.9.94.
109 Interview with male local activist, 2.9.94.
110 Interview with female national activist, 11.12.94. The quote remembered from the Daily Telegraph is reminiscent of a statement made by Max Nicholson that, 'Naive as they look, and indeed are, the ecologists and their fellow travellers bid fair in history to relegate Karl Marx to the status of a smalltime bungling amateur at the task of triggering world revolution'. Cited in Lowe and Worboys, op. cit., pp. 437-438.
111 Interview with male local and national activist, 30.7.94.

the vacated political space. The view was also expressed that it was better to take a clear stance in relation to other political parties. Finally there were those who saw the Green Party as of the far left because of its egalitarian and anti-capitalist stance, which combined with its goal of the total transformation of society, made it a revolutionary Party. However, though a sizeable proportion of the activists would have no problem with portraying themselves as further left than the Labour Party, few wished to present the Green Party as on the far left, and even those who did so accepted that it could not be seen as exclusively left since green politics incorporated new political dimensions. This partly explains why, despite occasional tensions, those who denied that green politics was left or right, and those who saw it as very much of the left were able to co-exist in the same party. Incidentally, none of the activists situated green politics as being towards the right of the political spectrum.

A number of theoretical perspectives have attempted to deal with the question of whether green politics represents an entirely new paradigm which cannot be located on the political spectrum, or if it is on the left, or somehow combines these two positions simultaneously. Scott has disputed claims that green politics transcends the categories of left and right on the grounds that it reproduces existing ideological divisions which can be identified by the emergence of corresponding factions within the green parties. Since he bases this argument on the dispute between the realists and fundamentalists in *Die Grünen*, as it was suggested in Chapter 1, it is not clear that this can be read simply as a conflict between left and right. Indeed both groupings can be interpreted as containing elements of left and right, as well as incorporating attempts to adopt entirely new positions. Similar conflicts have been identified within

the Green Party, such as those between the electoralists and the decentralists noted by Rüdig and Lowe, but as it was argued in Chapter 3, these divisions were provoked by a particular conflict over organisation and strategy, and since they did not extend to include other issues, cannot necessarily be seen as evidence of an ideological split.

Interpreting the activists' accounts on this issue, certainly amongst those who wished to deny that green politics is either left or right were a small number of former conservative voters who retained a strong bias against socialism, but there were others who wished to portray green politics as distinct whilst recognising the importance of socialist influences upon it. Even amongst those who declared that green politics inclined towards the left, many also wanted to argue that it was not on the spectrum, or that the left-right spectrum was not the only criterion by which a political position could be evaluated. Whilst in one sense Scott is correct to see the continued presence within green politics of conflicts between right and left, this does not necessarily simply reproduce itself in factional groupings, and his view ignores the extent to which new stances are involved which are not always easy to categorise in terms of a left-right spectrum. Thus in focusing on continuities Scott does not adequately recognise the extent to which green politics also adopts new and distinct positions.

Dobson provides an alternative approach to this issue by identifying green politics as a political ideology in its own right, in that by focusing on the limits to growth and human responsibilities towards the non-human world, it has developed a description of the world, a programme for change, and a picture of a desired future society. He believes this makes green politics sufficiently distinct to

prevent it from being easily incorporated within existing ideologies. Dobson equates green claims to be beyond left and right with their critique of communism and capitalism, both of which are perceived as subscribing to industrial productivism and economic growth. Yet at the same time he notes that green politics upholds many of the values of the left, such as equality, whilst rejecting those of the right such as hierarchy, to the extent that he feels able to state:

> Understanding the political and intellectual nature of Green politics means seeing that its political prescriptions are fundamentally left-liberal, and if a text, a speech or an interview on the politics of the environment sounds different from that then it is not Green but something else.[112]

Thus effectively he denies that green politics as an ideology can take a right wing form. There is a problem with Dobson's statement in that it could be regarded as essentialist, for in dealing with the issue at a philosophical level a number of examples can be found of attempts to articulate green politics in ways which could be interpreted as conservative or authoritarian. It may be that these are not representative but it does suggest that theoretically the potential exists for green politics to take a right wing form. A possible resolution to this problem would be to ground discussions of green ideology in the practices of particular groups such as the green parties, who can indeed be regarded as rejecting authoritarian approaches and representing a left-liberal stance as the activists' accounts clearly reveal.

Whilst accepting that green politics cannot be limited to categories of left and right, Hayward also makes the point that it cannot be seen as neutral on issues of social justice, welfare, and

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112 A. Dobson, Green Political Thought, 1990, op. cit., p. 84.

distribution. This leads him to argue that though the green parties represent a new kind of politics based on alternative strategies and practices, at the same time they constitute a continuation or extension of the left. For Offe too, whilst green politics portrays itself as transcending categories of left and right, it nevertheless shares many values with the left. Though accepting that they are not conservative, he does not believe that they are progressive either because of their failure to develop a coherent ideology or common goal. A similar view is taken by Kitschelt who observes that despite claiming to be beyond left and right, the green parties are anti-hierarchical, anti-capitalist, favour intervention in the market and support redistribution of income, which suggests that they incline towards the left. Yet at the same time they reject economic growth, bureaucracy, and central planning, on which grounds he distinguishes them from the old left by describing them as left-libertarian. Though he accepts that the green parties subscribe to a recognisable set of values largely derived from left and liberal sources, such as equity, social justice, participation and autonomy, like Offe, Kitschelt regards them as lacking a unified ideology or comprehensive goal, but rather as representing a negative consensus. This leads him to suggest that green discourse is pluralist, drawing on traditional socialist and liberal arguments and combining these with a critique of existing practices to form a left-libertarian outlook.

Each of the theoretical perspectives which address this issue make important points, but none provide a complete portrayal corresponding to the picture revealed by the activists' accounts. There is unanimity that green politics draws on the values of the left, which can be substantiated by the activists' accounts in Chapter 4, and those considered in section I above, where socialism was

considered the strongest influence out of all other political philosophies, followed by anarchism and liberalism. This lends some support to the argument made by Kitschelt and Hellemans that green politics is ideologically pluralist in that left and liberal arguments coexist with new elements within green discourse. However, as Kitschelt also notes, though green politics draws on previous ideologies, at the same time it rejects a number of their core assumptions, as was also made clear in the last part of section I above. Offe too recognises that a feature of green politics is that it identifies the incompatibility of certain conjunctions of values, but whilst Offe and Kitschelt both point to the green parties' rejection of economic growth, bureaucracy, and central planning, they wish to argue that green politics lacks a coherent ideology or common goal.

This last point is not corroborated by the activists' accounts, for as was seen in Chapter 4 and the discussions in Chapter 5, their outlook cannot be portrayed simply as a negative consensus defined in terms of what they oppose, or as entirely derived from other ideological perspectives. Though there are disagreements, tensions, and contradictions within and between their accounts, nevertheless a recognisable and comprehensive worldview emerges which all the activists broadly subscribe to. This incorporates an analysis of contemporary economic, social, political, and environmental problems, and a vision of the kind of sustainable society they wish to bring about. On most points this corresponds to Dobson's ideal type of a green ideology. One area which does not fully meet Dobson's criteria concerns the apparent failure to develop the organisational and strategic means to bring their ideal society into being, though as Hayward notes, green politics does actively promote alternative strategies and practices.

The strength of Dobson's position is that it fully recognises green politics as a distinct ideology in competition with other ideologies. It follows from this that declaring green politics to be neither left nor right offers the activists a rhetorical device by which they can accentuate its divergence from other political viewpoints and establish a separate identity for it. However, given that green politics has tended to draw on ideas associated with the left rather than those of the right, attempting to describe and explain the political location of such a newly emerged ideology is bound to confront ambiguities as to whether it can be categorised as a continuation of the politics of the left or constitutes an entirely new perspective which cannot be accommodated on the existing political spectrum. This is something which has perplexed not only the commentators on green politics, but also many of the activists themselves. The only possible answer that can be given on the basis of the accounts of those involved is that it represents both a new synthesis which seeks to break with old orthodoxies, and an extension of the left in the direction of an alternative set of social goals.

Conclusion

Bringing together the three strands of which this Chapter has comprised, it can be seen that green politics as represented by the Green Party activists, has been significantly influenced by existing political philosophies. Though the activists regarded socialism and anarchism as having provided the main inputs, liberalism, conservatism, and feminism were also recognised to have made

important contributions. Thus many of the values and principles associated with green politics such as equity, social justice, participation, decentralisation, self-reliance, co-operation, autonomy, tolerance, and responsibility, can all be seen as derived from existing outlooks, as the activists freely acknowledged. However, at the same time they rejected core assumptions associated with past political philosophies and the political parties which are the contemporary representatives of these traditions, most notably their commitment to economic growth and expansion of production. This can be related to the activists' opposition to large scale capitalism which they regarded as the principal cause of the destruction of communities and environments, on the grounds that it is unsustainable and unaccountable. Hence they see a need to intervene in the market, reduce global trade, and subject business to democratic control.

Amongst the theoretical perspectives which considered this area few acknowledged the full range of political influences, or made it sufficiently clear which aspects of each tradition could be considered incompatible with green politics. This leads to the argument raised by Martell that since ecology is unable to provide the basis of a distinct political position, being unable to provide answers to social and political questions, green politics cannot be regarded as an ideology in its own right because it has borrowed so extensively from other political philosophies. From the activists' accounts it can be concluded that those elements which are borrowed are articulated in conjunction with components from other sources which combine to provide a distinct worldview reflecting the social base of those involved in green politics. By grounding the argument in the beliefs and practices of a specific group, this lends support to Dobson's contention that green politics does not just involve a concern with

ecology, but has developed an alternative economic, social, and political analysis, which aims at creating an entirely new kind of society.

A second set of arguments concerned claims that green politics represented tendencies which could be described as ecofascist, authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban, or backward looking in *that it sought a return* to some kind of simple rural society. As was demonstrated by the activists' responses, little *confirmation could be* found to substantiate such charges. Whilst there was some evidence of attitudes which implied moral authoritarianism, opposition to technology, and anti-urbanism, such stances were rejected by the majority of activists. On the wider question of whether green politics could be seen as a Romantic movement or as a continuation of the Enlightenment project, it does represent a fundamental critique of modernity in that many contemporary practices are regarded as neither rational nor enlightened. In this sense there are indications that green politics incorporates a reflexive critique of modernity which argues for the application of an alternative rationality in which economic and technical decisions are subject to ethical evaluation and democratic control. Whilst green politics does retain a commitment to many of the principal values of the Enlightenment, at the same time it is informed by Romantic critiques of modernity, though this does not necessarily imply a backward looking perspective. Rather it could be seen as providing a focus for attempts to create an alternative future. Thus green politics must be seen as forward looking rather than backward looking.

A third set of arguments addressed the position of green politics in relation to the left-right political spectrum. The activists themselves were divided on this issue with over a third maintaining

green politics could not be placed on the spectrum at all, a quarter stating that though it was not on the spectrum it was on the left, whilst the remainder accepted that it was on the spectrum where it could be placed very much on the left. There was a consensus amongst those theoretical perspectives that considered this issue that green politics did indeed incorporate many values of the left, but there was little discussion of where it should be placed on the spectrum in relation to other political positions, or whether it represented an entirely *new political perspective* that could not be situated on the spectrum at all. Some accounts, such as that of Scott suggested that green politics involved a continuation of the politics of left and right, and by implication did not transcend the conventional political spectrum. Others such as Dobson, Hayward, Offe, and Kitschelt acknowledged that there were ways in which green politics did go beyond left and right to incorporate new positions. Once again most considerations of this issue were framed in terms of the debate whether green politics represented a distinct ideology. Unlike the earlier contribution of Martell, those such as Offe and Kitschelt who denied that green politics constituted a distinct ideology recognised that it rejected core assumptions of existing outlooks, such as the need to maintain economic growth, productivism, and centralised bureaucratic systems, but argued that in this it merely represented a negative consensus which had no clear alternative goal.

However, the activists' accounts clearly reveal a worldview which cannot be described as simply negative, encompassing as it does a comprehensive set of beliefs based on notions such as sustainability, holistic or global analysis, responsibility to future generations and the non-human world, and a value rationality that

insists on the non-separation of means and ends. In that this worldview seeks to address economic, social, political, ethical, and environmental concerns, providing an analysis of modern society and conceiving of a future society oriented towards an alternative set of goals, it can clearly be regarded as a distinct ideology in the way that Dobson has suggested. Like other ideologies it has incorporated ideas from other perspectives, whilst defining itself in opposition to others, resulting in a package of ideas in which old and new elements are articulated in a distinct combination, reflecting the situation and experiences of the social group who are the principal agents of this set of beliefs and practices.

As it is an entirely new political perspective, locating green politics in terms of conventional positions is not a straightforward exercise. It has borrowed some elements from existing outlooks but rejected others. It does constitute a critique of modernity, but is not wholly anti-modern, being forward rather than backward looking. It does incline towards the left of the political spectrum, but at the same time seeks to take society in an entirely new direction. However, the outlook of Green Party activists represents only one form of green politics, and like other ideologies this too is likely to develop and change as it adapts to alterations in its structural situation and is required to address constituencies which take it beyond its existing social base. Thus green ideology is still at an early stage of its growth, and so whilst it is possible to describe it in its current form, it is too early to say what it will become in the future.

CONCLUSION

Bringing together the different strands that have made up this study, it can be seen that though only comprising of the investigation of one group representative of green politics, it does lend support to the original contention that most theoretical perspectives on the subject remain insufficiently grounded in the beliefs and practices of those actually involved. This situation has resulted from a tendency to rely on a limited range of sources that do not fully represent what a green political practice consists of. This does not mean that such perspectives cannot often offer insights into the ideological outlook of green politics, but because they do not fully reflect the beliefs of those involved, they remain limited in applicability. One factor compounding this problem is that there is comparatively little discussion of the beliefs underlying a green political practice available in the public domain, whilst most research to date has concentrated on the organisation, policies, and strategies of groups active in green politics, rather than on ideology. Whilst it is possible to gain some indication of the underlying beliefs from the available sources, these do not present anything like a complete picture. Hence this investigation has sought to remedy this situation by interviewing a small sample of Green Party activists, combined with participant observation, in order to complement the documentary sources.

The worldview emerging from the activists' accounts reveals a distinctive and interrelated system of beliefs which address the economic, social, political, and ethical spheres, being applicable to their personal and social life, as well as their collective political

practice. Whilst the activists do not necessarily agree on every point, they broadly accept the package as a whole as providing a means to analyse and understand the world. There were some surprises concerning the areas where they put their main emphasis in their discussions. One of these was the relative absence of consideration of purely environmental or ecological issues within the activists' accounts. It was not that they did not see these as important. To some extent such concerns were taken for granted, but they did not want to be seen as focused exclusively on environmental issues. This was because they saw the causes of these and other problems as resulting from current economic, social, and political practices, which ultimately could only be addressed by a radical transformation of society as a whole. Thus to focus on one issue was seen as neglecting the ways in which this was interrelated to other factors.

The relative lack of emphasis on environmental factors can be set alongside the importance the activists placed on other areas such as equity and social justice, from which any solution to environmental problems was regarded as inseparable. This also connects to their insistence on the need for participatory forms of democracy combined with an increase in local control over issues facing communities, which they see as assuring a more equitable, just, and sustainable society. Another factor that has relevance here is that on an ethical level, the activists did not prioritise values concerning the relationship with the non-human world above social values. Though emphasising the importance of human responsibility towards nature, they also insisted on the centrality of responsibility in all social relationships. This was particularly apparent as regards the lifestyle

component which required the activists to put their beliefs into practice on a personal as well as a collective level.

Relating these findings to the theoretical perspectives, whilst some of these proved applicable in regard to certain areas, the activists' accounts did not always conform to theoretical expectations of what green politics consists of. Thus the activists cannot be described as merely environmentalist, as Dobson implies, but neither can they be described as ecocentric in the sense the term is used by Eckersley. This is not to say that an interpretation of ecology did not serve a cosmological function within their outlook along the lines suggested by Eyerman and Jamison, providing a basis for an analysis of current practices, and encouraging an integrated understanding of their own beliefs, and of the world as a whole. One area where this is apparent is in their critique of economic growth and their conception of the limits that constrain it. Though Benton is no doubt correct that there are elements of biological determinism within conceptions of limits in relation to the biosphere, it can be seen that the activists link such an understanding to a critique of global capitalism, and to the intention of creating an alternative sustainable society. Hence there is a recognition on their part that variations in forms of social and economic organisation will impact on these limits, whereas others will not.

It is a strength of some of the sociological approaches that by focusing on the class base of green politics they are able to suggest links between social location and the outlook expressed by those involved. Thus Cotgrove and Duff, Gouldner, Offe, and Habermas point to the importance of occupational position or education, or a combination of both, as a major influence shaping the concerns of green politics. Given that almost all the activists were educated to

university level, and that most of those in full-time employment worked in the public sector, it is possible to characterise the majority of them as members of the New Middle Class. This goes some way to explaining aspects of their economic, social, and political concerns. The occupational position of those in the public sector, and the high value the group as a whole are likely to place upon higher education, does partly account for their critique of free market capitalism and the emphasis they place on the quality of life rather than issues of quantity. However, it would not be strictly accurate to describe them as anti-economistic in outlook as some of the sociological accounts appear to suggest. Rather the activists demonstrate an alternative conception of economics based on sustainability.

The activists' social concerns are also partly attributable to their educational and occupational background, hence their commitment to values such as equity and social justice. This can also be related to a tendency to deny the importance of class and to seek to portray themselves as representing all social groups as Gouldner and Offe suggest. Also relevant in this respect is Mellor's observation that tensions exist within green conceptions of social justice between collective notions of rights and those relating to personal freedom. The libertarian emphasis on freedom of expression can perhaps be connected to the counter-cultural background of many of the activists, whilst their concerns over social exclusion could be interpreted in terms of their own experiences of social and political marginalisation.

As regards the political dimension of green politics, the sociological perspectives show themselves to be highly applicable concerning the activists' ambivalent attitudes towards the state.

Whilst a large proportion of them have been employed by the state, or are financially dependent upon it, they tend to be highly critical of it as an institution. As Offe and Habermas imply, this is because of the state's role as the agent of an extension of bureaucratic control into the private sphere, which given the anti-authoritarian stance of green politics, is bound to result in attempts at resistance to this process. However, this reveals a gap in the strategic outlook of many of the activists who do not appear to have seriously considered the role of the state in green politics. Whilst they oppose the state in some areas, in others they seem to assume its continued existence. This can be related to their failure to develop an intermediate strategy between their short-term and long-term goals.

It is in the sphere of the activists' ethical concerns that the theoretical perspectives seem less directly applicable. The accounts of Habermas, Beck, Lowe and Worboys, Enzensberger, and Benton, all focus on the role of ecology as a source of values in green politics, something they tend to equate with a backward looking, non-rational, conservative, or biological reductionist outlook. Whilst the activists do seem to have incorporated a reading of ecology that can be interpreted as embodying moral imperatives, as witnessed by their usage of terms such as holistic, interdependence, balance, and diversity, these are combined with social values, often more usually associated with socialist or anarchist sources. Though recognising the moral status of nature and human responsibilities towards it, they do not necessarily regard all life as equal, and accept that humans have the right to intervene where necessary. Certainly in this they cannot be portrayed as conservative or backward looking, for their conception of nature is quite different from that apparent in

conservative ideologies, and they show no desire to return to some kind of traditional organic society.

Undoubtedly there are contradictions in some of the stances the activists adopt, for in attempting to combine ecological and social ideas this does carry elements of biological determinism, but at the same time they show some awareness that values concerning nature are socially constructed. It was Hayward's focus on responsibility as a core value of green politics that most strongly echoed the activists' ethical concerns. This can be related to the critique of instrumental rationality which Gouldner, Offe, Habermas, Beck, and Giddens, all noted as a central theme of green politics. Though the activists rarely discussed this in an explicit way, it was present in their awareness of the consequences of actions and their insistence on the inseparability of means and ends.

This leads to the lifestyle dimension of green politics. The activists' accounts reveal that Goodin's portrayal of lifestyle concerns as a denial of collective action is based on a misrepresentation of the role lifestyle plays in a green political practice. Dobson's account is better, for though in identifying lifestyle principally in terms of its consumerist and spiritual aspects, he portrays it in terms of individual responses, he also recognises that in allowing the exploration of alternative ways of living it can serve a consciousness raising dimension. Habermas, Beck, and Giddens go further by acknowledging that lifestyle involves attempts to create new social collectivities and forms of action, but tend to underestimate the extent to which green politics encompasses such a programme. It is Hayward who demonstrates the clearest appreciation of the potential of the lifestyle dimension of green politics, through its ability to create new public spaces, new avenues of resistance, and a new

definition of the political. The activists' own involvement in lifestyle as part of a collective political practice can certainly be seen in these terms, but this still does not approach the full range of meanings involved in such activities.

In relation to the consideration of the political location of green ideology, it can be seen that few of the theoretical perspectives considered in depth the full range of continuities and discontinuities with other political traditions. Given that they wish to present green politics as a new and distinct position, the activists showed a surprising readiness to acknowledge areas where their outlook has been influenced by other political philosophies, including not only socialism and anarchism, but also to a lesser extent liberalism, conservatism, and feminism. However, as might be expected they also wished to emphasise their differences from other existing political positions, which can be related principally to their opposition to large scale capitalism and economic growth.

Regarding the critiques of green politics which suggest that it is potentially authoritarian, anti-technological, anti-urban, and desirous of a return to nature, these could not be sustained as far as the activists' accounts were concerned. No evidence could be found to support charges that continuities exist between green politics and fascism. Whilst there were some trends suggesting the presence of elements of moral authoritarianism, calls for the rejection of all large scale technologies, and aspects of anti-urbanism, these could be regarded as minority positions which most of the activists rejected. In terms of green critiques of modernity, whilst these did contain Romantic elements, they were also based on a reflexive perspective which is very much a product of modernity. This can be related to their critique of instrumental rationality, and the desire to

construct an alternative rationality in which ethical criteria take precedence over economic and technical arguments. This stance runs counter to those theoretical perspectives, such as those of Habermas, Beck and Giddens, who seek to portray green politics as backward looking and anti-rational.

As to the position of green politics in relation to the left-right political spectrum, just as the activists were divided on this issue, so were many of the theoretical commentators. On the basis of the activists' accounts, green politics certainly could not be portrayed as inclined towards the right. Indeed a majority of them endorsed a number of positions normally associated with the left, but at the same time the activists sought to incorporate new positions which cannot easily be represented on the left-right spectrum. Some commentators, such as Dobson, Hayward, Offe, and Kitschelt, accepted that green politics did go beyond left and right to encompass new perspectives. However, whilst they recognised the extent to which green politics rejected core assumptions associated with existing outlooks, Offe and Kitschelt suggested that this amounted to a negative consensus rather than indicating support for a clear alternative goal. Dobson adopts an opposite stance, arguing that green politics can be regarded as a distinct ideology which has an analysis of the world, a recognisable set of goals, and a set of strategies directed towards achieving them. In this he comes close to the views of the activists themselves, whose accounts reveal that their worldview cannot be portrayed purely in negative terms.

Out of all the theoretical perspectives it is Dobson who provides the most comprehensive description of the main elements comprising a green ideology and how they are combined together, approximating the findings from the activists' accounts. Though his

ideal type does not conform to the activists' interpretation of their outlook in every respect, at a general level his portrayal encompasses the full range of their concerns.

By relating the ideas held by those involved in green politics to their social location and structural conditions, the sociological perspectives are often able to provide explanations that contribute insights that go beyond the activists' own understanding of their concerns. Whilst none of these studies is able to offer a complete portrayal of green politics, they can prove highly applicable in a number of areas. Though Cotgrove and Duff, Gouldner, and Offe all make valuable contributions in this respect, it is Habermas who goes furthest towards providing a theoretical explanation of green politics. However, due to his interpretation of what constitutes modernity, and his conceptualisation of relationships with nature, Habermas' portrayal of green politics is a highly ambivalent one, which, when contrasted with the activists' accounts, leads to a misinterpretation of some of the positions they actually adopt. Furthermore, nowhere does Habermas provide a thorough discussion of green politics, hence his analysis of the issues involved has to be gleaned from occasional, fragmentary, and sometimes contradictory observations made at different points in the vast corpus of his work. As regards the theories concerning the political location of green ideology, the most insightful are those of Benton on the issues of limits and conceptions of nature as value, Mellor on the contradictions apparent in green interpretations of rights, and Hayward on the centrality of notions of responsibility.

Thus it can be said that the best of the theoretical perspectives are partly corroborated by the findings on the outlook of Green Party activists, and are even able to provide an additional

layer of explanation that goes beyond the self-conceptions of those actually involved in green politics. However, with the possible exception of Dobson, none of the theoretical studies is able to give anything like a complete portrayal, and though proving highly applicable in some areas, often make mistaken assumptions in others. Hence, by demonstrating what positions those involved in green politics do adopt, the activists' accounts often provide the means to resolve possible tensions within and between the theoretical perspectives.

In this connection it should be remembered that the Green Party represents only one form of a green political practice. This highlights the need for further research in this area, not only to compare the outlooks of different green parties, but also to explore the continuities and discontinuities between the beliefs and practices of various groups concerned with the politics of the environment. Thus it would be useful to learn the extent to which members of Friends of the Earth, roads protesters, and other comparable groups share common assumptions with Green Party members, since there does seem to be some cross-over between them, yet perhaps significant differences could be found also. Some earlier research on members of environmental groups was suggestive of commonalities of outlook existing between them and the outlook of those in the green parties, but it is not clear whether this could still be seen to be the case. Another area that could merit further exploration concerns the origins of a distinctive green worldview, not just in terms of the history of environmental ideas and movements, but also as regards the influence of counter-cultural networks in the 1960s and 1970s from which many of the beliefs current in the green movement emerged, shaping the outlook of many of those who subsequently

became involved in green politics. One way to do this would be to explore in depth the life histories and socialisation of those attracted to green politics.

Green politics continues to develop as a perspective, moving from its origins amongst a marginal social group to become incorporated within the mainstream of politics. Yet in that process only parts of the green message have been found compatible with more established political positions. For the moment this leaves the green parties still in a somewhat marginal position with the more acceptable parts of their policies having been borrowed, with what remains being generally regarded as unrealistic in current circumstances. It remains to be seen whether mainstream attempts to solve environmental problems can succeed without addressing the rest of the package that green politics represents. The recent increases in the level of local protests and popular sympathy towards them, is perhaps an indication that these concerns are not being addressed, for if a channel is not available within the political system, then other approaches will be sought. Hence it would appear that there is a continuing role for the political expression of these concerns, for whilst the problems it addresses remain, green politics will not go away. Thus green politics is still in its infancy and it remains to be seen how it is likely to develop as it adapts to changing conditions.

APPENDIX 1

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION SCHEDULE

1: Social Background, Life History and Environment:

a) Gender and date of birth

b) Parents' class background, education and occupation

c) Perceived social class then and now

d) Parents' voting behaviour and political involvement

e) Religion

f) What was your family or home life like(Were family relationships good?).

g) Could you describe the places where you have lived from childhood to the present, including your educational and occupational history, and any other significant events in your life (house/area, why chose jobs, who living with, marriage, children, urban/rural, where do you feel at home, sense of environment).

h) What were your childhood experiences of the environment (memories, feelings, parental/family influence, school, friends, play, holidays, animals, gender dimension, positive experiences of environment and awareness of environmental destruction?).

2: Political Socialisation and the Origins of Green Politics:

a) When did you become interested in environmental issues and why? Influences? (ie media, books, TV, newspapers, films, milieu, counter-culture, education, science, other?) Where does your knowledge of environmental issues come from and how well formed was this before joining movement?

b) How does your personal history and interest in the environment relate to the wider influence of social, political and historical events? Is there a connection between the two?

c) When did this interest take a political form? Past political attitudes and involvement. Membership of other groups and campaigns. When did you join the Green Party and why? How did you make contact? Level of activity over time? (national/local, conferences, elections, campaigns?) What effect do you think you've had and what keeps you going?

d) Why do you think you became Green? Was this a gradual process or sudden conversion? Any influences contributing to your involvement in green politics not discussed so far?

3: Green Ideology and its Political and Social Location:

a) What do you understand green politics to be? Do you think its goals have changed over time? Is it unified or are there different forms? Is it different from environmentalism?

b) Have you incorporated conceptions of nature, environment, or ecology into your political philosophy? If so, how?

c) Is there a distinct green ideology, what is it, and what makes it different from other political ideologies? Is there an essential greenness? What is it for and what is it against? Is it motivated by fear or hope? How do you see the future at best, and at worst? (urgency?)

d) How does green politics relate to established political philosophies (liberalism, socialism, anarchism feminism and conservatism. Is it influenced by past philosophies and is it more compatible with some than others?)

e) How would you place green politics in relation to the political spectrum? Should the Green Party operate more like the mainstream political parties or should it try to be different? (Media constraints, how alternative can it be?)

f) How do you see the claims of other political parties who have sought to portray themselves as green? (Labour/socialist, Liberal Democrat, Conservative, National Front/fascist)

g) Greens are often portrayed in negative terms, being accused of being implicitly authoritarian (how to enforce green demands?), anti-technological, anti-urban, and of wanting to return to some idealised state of nature or rural idyll. How would you respond to such charges? (feelings about urban and rural life, do they want to go back to nature?) Are the greens a romantic movement or does their alternative incorporate a planned, scientific approach?

h) Another aspect related to this is that greens could be seen as representing a narrow social group which is predominantly white and middle class. What kind of social dimension do you see green politics as having and in what way does it respond to the needs of the working class, ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups? (social justice)

i) Green critiques of economic growth seem mainly concerned with the distribution and consumption of resources. How does Green politics address issues of production? (how do you produce things in an acceptable way and can it be reconciled with capitalism)

j) Can you picture a future green society? What form might it take and how would it be organised and administered? (ie role of state, law, democracy, property ownership, work, gender, domestic labour) How do you see this operating at a local, national and global level? (bioregions, national and international outlook, development, population)

k) By what means do you see such a society being brought into being? (strategy, political power, vested interests. Would some kind of disaster necessarily lead to green society?)

4: Lifestyle, Practice, Identity, Values and Beliefs:

a) Is lifestyle an important component of your green politics? How does your own lifestyle relate to your beliefs and political practice? What kinds of things do you do as part of a green lifestyle?

b) How much time do you spend in activities related to green issues? To what extent does your social network (friends, family, other social contacts) consist of other people sympathetic to, or involved in green politics? (milieu) Is being green the most important aspect of your identity?

c) How do your personal values connect with your commitment to green politics? Were you attracted to green politics because of your values, or did becoming green encourage you to see things in a new way? Are there Green values? What is un-Green? (Green culture?)

d) Are you living your life now the way you want to? What do you think is wrong with the way you (or we) are living now? How would you like (your) life to be (different)? What do you want from life and from your relationships with others?

e) Does green politics include for you spiritual or other dimensions that go beyond areas normally thought of in political terms? (Deep Ecology. Balance between material and non-material aspects of Green politics, post-materialism? Search for meaning and identity in face of materialism, consumerism and alienation)

f) Are there any important areas that you think I have missed? What other questions would you have liked to have been asked?

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